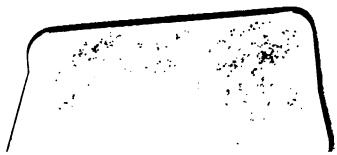

SHORT

SERMONS FOR CHILDREN.

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BY THE

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TO MY CHILDREN

I DEDICATE

THESE SERMONS.

I KNOW few tasks more difficult than that of writing for children. Since I have undertaken this present work, I am more than ever impressed with admiration for the powers of those who clothe holy teaching in language suited to the intelligence of the little ones I have attempted in these Sermons to speak simply to young children, and to add some counsels for those who have left the nursery and the school-room for the wider, and more dangerous, world of domestic service.

Ifield Rectory.

Lent, 187 i.

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SERMON I.

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"Come, Lord Jesus."

"COME, and let us reason together, saith the "Lord." Such, dear children, is the message which God sends to us at this holy season of Advent. You know what Advent means? It means 'coming,' and it tells us about our dear Saviour's first coming to save the world, and about His second coming to judge the world. What is the word which we have to think about most at this time? It is the word "*Come.*" This is the cry of the church all over the world, and of the church in Heaven also. When you learned the Creed you learned to say, "I believe "in the Holy Catholic Church." What does this mean? It means that you believe in *one, universal* Church, part of which is in Heaven,

and part of which is on earth. Some people will try to tell you that there are many different churches. It is not so, there is only *one Church*, founded by Jesus Christ. There are many branches of that one Church, just as there are many branches of one tree, one branch of the Church is here in England, another far away in another land, but they are all *one*. Those who belong to the Church believe in the same things, and worship God in the same way, whether they live here, or on the other side of the world. But I told you that the Holy Catholic Church was partly on earth, and partly in Heaven. When holy people die they pass away from the Church on earth, and they go to the Church in Heaven. They do not praise God any more in the old Church at home, but they go to the Church in Paradise, and praise Him there. Well, dear children, we have to think about the word '*come*.' This is what the Church on earth, and the Church in Heaven is saying to us. The poor sinner who is tied and bound with his sin, like a prisoner with his chain, says "come, Lord "Jesus, and set me free." The weary invalid as he lies on his sick-bed says, "come Lord Jesus, "come good Physician, and heal me." The sad

mourner who kneels by a new-made grave says, "come Thou Lord of comfort, wipe away all "tears from all faces." Then there is a great voice from Heaven which says, "come up hither, "and I will show thee the things which shall be "hereafter.—Jesus shall come with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they who pierced Him. And of that day of His coming knoweth no man, for He shall come as a thief in the night, and the great white throne shall be set, and the books shall be opened, wherein are written the stories of our lives, and the graves shall give up their dead, and those who are living shall be caught up and meet the Lord in the air. In that day there shall be heard a cry, "behold the "bridegroom cometh," that is, Jesus cometh, and it will be a sad day for those whose lamps are gone out, like the lamps of the foolish virgins, for the door shall be shut, the door of Heaven shall be shut against them. Listen, dear children, again we hear another voice, what does it say? It says—come, prepare to meet thy God, whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and He shall gather the wheat into His barn, and He shall burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Who may abide the day of

His coming? Who shall stand when He appareth, for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.

Listen, again we hear a voice. It is the voice of one of God's warrior angels, one of those who fight for us. What says that voice? It says, be strong and of good courage, quit you like men and fight, arise, good Christian child, and put your armour on; come to the battle, the hard battle against sin, the world, and the devil; if sin beset you, then, children though you be, be brave, quit you like men and fight; if the world tempt you, remember under whose flag you are, look up and see the banner of the cross over you, and fight; if your enemy, the devil, tries to wound you, tries to injure your soul, tries to stain the white robe which was given you in baptism, then take courage; you are but little children, weak and feeble, but remember that those who are with you are more than those who are against you. The bright angels, the watchers, the holy ones are on your side, they are about your bed when you sleep, and about your path when you walk abroad, they will fight for you, if you will fight for yourselves. And above all remember that Jesus is on your side, He is the

great Captain who leads you, His little flock, to battle with sin, and so you may all say—

> "We march, we march to victory,
> With the Cross of the Lord before us,
> With His loving eye looking down from the sky,
> And His Holy arm spread o'er us."

Listen again, there is another voice speaking to you. It is the voice of the old, grey-haired man, St. Paul, Paul the aged. What will he say to you? He says, come, take the whole armour of God, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, and the shield of faith. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, strive to shew *yourselves* good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Hark! Again there is another voice which we must all hear. It is a voice soft as the breeze of summer sighing among the leaves, a voice gentle as that of a mother speaking to her child; yet it is a voice clear "as a trumpet with a silver sound," a voice which is heard from one end of the earth to the other. It is a voice which we all know, it says to us, come unto Me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Come unto Me and take of the water of

life freely. It is a voice which says to those who have fallen into evil ways, come forth, and come hither. Come, for all things are now ready. Come, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly, come, take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Come forth out of the grave of sin and death, for I am the Resurrection and the Life. Come forth from the paths of evil, and let the wicked forsake his ways, for I am come to seek and to save those who are lost.

Come to me, O ye children, for they who seek me early shall find me. I became a little child, I lay in a rough manger, I wore poor swaddling clothes, I was subject to my earthly parents for your sakes, that I might be the children's Friend, the Friend who never changes, that I might make you children of God, and heirs of everlasting life. Suffer the little children to come unto me. At the holy font of Baptism I receive them, there I take them in my arms, and they are signed with my sign, the sign of the Cross, in their foreheads. Then they are made mine for ever, and they shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels.

And that voice, the voice of Jesus, speaks to you who are older, to you young men and maidens,

and it says,—"Wherewithal shall a young "man cleanse his way? Even by ruling himself "after my word. Blessed are the pure in heart, "for they shall see God. My Son, keep thyself "pure." That voice too speaks to you when you are out in the world working for your living, and it says,—"Come, come to me you busy workers, "who rise early, and so late take rest, and I will "show you how to make your work a blessing. "I worked on earth, in the carpenter's shop in "Galilee. I was the friend of Joseph the "carpenter, and Peter the fisherman, I was "hungry and thirsty, and my soul fainted within "me. Are you sometimes weary? I was weary "too. Do you sometimes think you are "neglected, and lonely? You were never so "lonely as I. Come to me, I will never leave "you, nor forsake you, I will be with you in your "work, with you boys in the fields, with you "girls in your service, in the shop, and the "factory, and the farm, when you lie down, and "when you rise up, I am with you always, even "unto the end of the world."

My children, if you are ever in doubt, troubled as to what you ought to do, listen to that dear voice of Jesus, and come to Him who

is the Light of the world, come to Him by prayer, come to Him by reading His gospel, come to Him by consulting His minister. If your lot is to be poor, then come to Him who became poor that He might make many rich, rich with the treasures of Heaven. When you are sick and ill, come to Him who is the Good Physician, who has medicine to cure your sickness. He says to you when you are in trouble, and even you little ones have your troubles, "come to "Me, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with "grief." When you have committed sin, and even you children often do commit sin, He says to you, "Come to me, for I came not to call the "righteous, but sinners to repentance. Whoso-"ever cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." Never be ashamed, or afraid to tell Jesus of your sins, He only can understand them, and forgive them.

Thus the Advent voices speak to us. Shall we not say, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O Lord?" Let your Advent prayer be that Jesus may come to us, and we to Him. When you pray, you ask God to make you and your friends prosperous and happy, and to keep your home safe and free from harm. But this is not enough. You

should pray to be made more holy, to be made more like our great pattern, Jesus Christ, to be made more fit for Heaven, where we hope one day to be.

Will you try for the future to pray more in this way, to pray that Jesus may come to you, and dwell with you, and guard you, and guide you, and make you holy; and that He may come not only to you, but to your friends and companions, to your school, and the homes of your neighbours? Will you try to pray that Jesus may come and quiet the sharp tongues, and purify the every-day talk, and sanctify, that is, make holy, the every-day life around you? Will you make this your Advent prayer—"Come, Lord Jesus."

SERMON II.

THE WINTRY FLIGHT.

(ADVENT.)

S. MATTHEW XXIV. 20.

"Pray that your flight be not in the winter."

WHEN Jesus Christ spoke thus to His disciples He was near the end of His life on earth; the Cross, and the grave in the garden were close at hand. These words, "pray that your flight be not "in the winter," meant much more than the disciples understood. Jesus, who knows all things, could read the future, and He was looking forward to a time when her enemies should cast a trench round about Jerusalem, and compass her, and keep her in on every side. When Sion, which had been called the joy of the whole earth, should be left desolate, when her people should no more sit under the shadow of their vines and fig-trees, but should see Jerusalem a heap of stones. He looked forward to a time when the blood of her

sons and daughters should stain the holy altar of the God of Abraham, when fierce hands should break down the carved work with axes and hammers; when, instead of the sacred songs of the Levites, there should be heard the laughter of rough soldiers, and instead of the holy instruments of music, there should be heard the cries of cruel men whose swords were red with the blood of their brethren. Jesus knew that all these things would take place in the siege of Jerusalem. He knew that the city would be crowded with people, met together to keep the Feast of the Passover, the last great public Passover which the Jews would ever keep—and He knew that the door-posts would not only be sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, but also with the blood of murdered men and women and little children. Well, Jesus foresaw that all this was coming, so He told His disciples that they must escape from Jerusalem when that time of trouble came. He told them that their flight would be sudden, that they would have no time to collect their property, not even their clothes; and He told them to pray that their flight might not be in the winter. My children, you can understand what a terrible thing such a flight would be in

the hard winter time. You can imagine how the weak women and the little children would suffer, hurrying away suddenly from their homes, along bad roads covered with snow, with only the short winter day for their journey, and a fierce enemy pursuing them.

When the Emperor Napoleon I. was obliged to retreat with his army from Moscow, the snow was very deep, and hundreds fell down and died by the road side. When the city of Paris was last besieged, the winter was very severe, and the people, especially the women and children, suffered most terribly. Well might the disciples pray that their flight might not be in the winter. And they did pray, and their prayer was heard, and their flight was not in the winter. Forty years later the City of Jerusalem was besieged by the Romans. The siege began at the Feast of the Passover, in April, and the city was burned in August. So the winter was passed, and the flowers were coming on the earth, when the Christians escaped from the city. All who believed in Jesus Christ remembered what He had said, and left their homes hurriedly, and fled to a little town called Pella, on the other side of the river Jordan. Not one Christian perished

in the siege of Jerusalem. The Jews who had refused to believe in Jesus, trusted to their strong walls, and their weapons, and stayed in the city. The place was crowded with people from all parts who had come to keep the Passover. This made the siege all the more dreadful, as soon there was no food for them to eat. For four months and a half the siege continued. One million, one hundred thousand people, men, women, and children, died in Jerusalem. In the neighbouring country, two hundred and fifty thousand perished, and ninety-five thousand were led away captive, of whom great numbers were starved. But those who were signed with the Cross in their foreheads, that is, those who were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus, were safe at Pella.

Now, my children, I have not told you these things only as a chapter of history. I want you to learn some very important lessons from these words, "pray that your flight be not in the "winter." For us there is an escape, a flight, to be undertaken, and for us there is a place of refuge like Pella. Jerusalem was not a safe home for God's people, it was a doomed city, a city of destruction because of its sin, and its unbelief. So God's people were told to escape, and they

did so. In the old days Lot was bidden to flee away from Sodom, because of its wickedness, and he escaped to Zoar and was safe. Your first flight from sin, dear children, was at your Baptism. When you came into the world, though you could not commit sin, yet you were not free from sin. As you inherit the looks or peculiarities of your parents, so you inherited the sins of Adam. You came into a sinful world, and you yourselves were sinful. But when you were baptised you passed through the water of the Font, as the Christians passed through the waters of Jordan, and you were received into a place of safety, the Church of Christ, just as they were received into Pella. But this is not the only flight from sin which you have to undertake. After your Baptism you may fall into evil ways, and you have often done so. And as long as you remain in that evil way you are in as great danger as those people who stayed in Jerusalem, you are living in a city of destruction. If you are the slave of a bad habit, if some besetting sin gets the better of you, then you have to flee away and escape. A vicious habit is a city of destruction, a besetting sin is a city of destruction, the company of the wicked is a city of destruc-

tion, and from these you must escape. As long as you continue in some sin, be it disobedience, or idleness, or impatience, or bad temper, or want of purity, or any other sin, you are like the doomed people in Jerusalem, not like those who were safe at Pella.

Now you see what I meant by your flight, I meant the forsaking your sins, the escape from evil habits. Pray then that *your* flight be now, at once, not in the winter.

What do I mean by the winter? First, I mean the *winter of old age, and weakness.* What the winter is to the year, so is old age to our life. Sometimes when we speak to children and young people about religion, when we tell them that they must try to lead holy lives, and follow the example of Jesus Christ, and keep a watch over their acts and words, they try *to put off* the matter. "When I am old and grey-headed I "shall have time to think seriously," they say, "now I have my lessons and my play to think "of, when I am a man I shall have my way to "make in life, and when I am old I shall give up "my time to religion." Ah! my children, don't deceive yourselves in this way. What we put off from day to day we never do. Do you

think God will let you live as you like now, and let you escape from all your sins in the winter of old age? Besides, how do you know that you will ever live to be old? There are many little graves in every churchyard. And even if you grow to be old men and women, you can only give God your heart when it has grown weak and feeble, perhaps hard and cold, you can only give God your thoughts when they are confused and wandering, and you can only give Him a body which is worn out. I have seen old people who long before they died were blind, and deaf and helpless, who were not strong enough to say a prayer, or to understand my voice; when they died they went out like an uncared-for lamp, they had tried to put off their flight till the winter. There are some foolish people who say to themselves, "let me have my own will to-day, "to-morrow I will do God's will. Let me indulge "myself to-day, to-morrow I will be more strict "and careful. Let me think of my work or my "pleasure to-day, to-morrow I shall have time to "think of my soul." Dear children, to-morrow never comes. What we have to do must be done to-day. You remember that rich man in the parable, he said, "to-morrow I will pull down

"my barns and build greater," and God said, "*Thou fool*, this night thy soul shall be required "of thee." Pray then that your flight from sin and the judgment which follows sin, may be now, not in the winter of weakness and old age. Pray also that your flight be not in the *winter of a hardened conscience.* You know that God has given each of you a conscience by which you know when you have done wrong. I believe and trust that now if you commit any sin, the thought of it makes your cheeks flush, and brings the tears to your eyes. But it will not be always so. When people go on sinning without repentance their conscience gets harder and harder, till at last they scarcely know right from wrong. God will not always speak to you by the voice of conscience. It is sweet spring-time with you now, dear children, but it will not be always so. If you let evil habits get the mastery over you, the time will come when it will be hard winter with you; when you will sin, and not be sorry, when your conscience will be frozen hard. How will you escape from your sins in that dark, cold winter time? You may shed a few tears at the last, but they will be tears of fear, rather than of repentance. You know a few drops of rain won't

dissolve a frost which has lasted for many months. So a few tears on a deathbed won't dissolve a conscience that has grown cold and hard in the long frost of sin. Pray then that your flight be not in the winter of old age, nor in the winter of a hardened conscience. Your flight from sin must be now, since "now is the day of salvation." Whatever your sins are, whatever your bad habits are, now is the time to escape. *Now.* That is the word for you to think about. And you will ask me, how are we to escape, and where are we to escape to. You know *from* what you are to flee, from besetting sins and evil habits. But how? By repentance. Now, my children, do you know what that means? You will say it means being sorry for your sins. That is true, but it is only half the truth. A child may say, "I "am sorry," and yet go and commit the same sin wilfully directly afterwards. That is not repentance. True repentance means, first, that we feel really sorry, really ashamed of ourselves, really grieved that we have offended one so good and loving as God is to us; and next, that we are determined to do better for the future. In a word, that we mean to flee away and escape from those sins, and the dangers which go with them,

just as the Christians determined to flee away and escape from Jerusalem. Now they had a place of safety to escape to, Pella, the city beyond Jordan. You, too, have a place of safety, even better than Pella. Your city of refuge is Jesus Christ, who is "a place to hide you in." Tell Him in your own language, in your own simple prayers, that you want to escape from your sins; tell Him what those sins are, for some of you fall in one way, some in another. Ask Him for pardon and He will give it, ask Him for strength and He will give it; He knows all your temptations, He was Himself a little child.

SERMON III.

EMMANUEL.

(CHRISTMAS.)

S. MATTHEW II. 2.

"Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"

I WANT you to go with me in fancy, my children, on this Christmas morning, to a little village far away from here, then we shall see the answer to the question of the text. The village is five miles from the great City of Jerusalem, and it is called Bethlehem, which means, the *House of Bread*, and sometimes it is called Ephrath, which means *fruitful*. It is well named, for all its valleys stand thick with corn in the summer, its hill sides are clothed with grape vines, and its gardens are planted with olives and fir trees. There are many Bible stories connected with Bethlehem, let us think of some of them as we look in fancy on this fair village.

A mile from Bethlehem, to the north, there is to this day a lonely grave. It is the grave of

Rachel, who died when her boy was born; she called him Benoni, the *son of my sorrow*, but Jacob his Father called him Benjamin, *son of my right hand.* There, then, close to Bethlehem, lies Rachel, the wife of Jacob. It was in the corn-fields, which gave the village the name of the House of Bread, that Ruth, the beautiful Moabitess, went to glean. If you were to go there in the time of barley-harvest, which is in April, you would see the corn fields just the same as ever, and the threshing-floor like that where Ruth slept at the feet of Boaz. Bethlehem is called the city of David, and it was there that the shepherd boy, who became King, kept his sheep. Many a time David must have looked up to the blue skies over Bethlehem, bright with stars, and then it was that he composed such Psalms as the 19th Psalm, where he says, "the "heavens declare the glory of God, and the "firmament showeth His handy-work." Many a time had He kept his sheep in the shady valleys of the fruitful village, and there he thought, "the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not "want: He maketh me to lie down in green "pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." The people of Bethlehem, which is a mountain

village, were brave and active like all mountaineers; they could handle the sling and the spear, and often did so to defend their sheep from wolves or bears. It was among them that David became so skilful with the sling, and thus was able to conquer the giant Goliath. But why, my children, have I asked you to come to Bethlehem in fancy with me, on this glad Christmas morning? It is that we may find out where He is, who is born King of the Jews. Where shall we look for Him? He is a King, therefore surely we shall find Him in the best house in Bethlehem? No, He is not there. His earthly parents have come on a journey, let us seek Him then in the best Inn of the village, where the camels of the travellers are lying about the door. He is not there, "there was no "room in the inn." "Where is He who is born "King of the Jews?" We must go to a poor cave, or grotto, used as a stable, where the oxen and the asses are eating their food. There wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger, we shall find Him who is not only King of the Jews, but King of Heaven and earth, King of Kings and Lord of Lords. That rough manger is His Throne, and His only attendants

are the cattle who seem to know that God careth for oxen. Here then in Bethlehem Ephrata, the fruitful House of Bread, He is born who is King of the Jews.

But in another sense we may ask "where is "He who is born King of the Jews?" And you would tell me that He is everywhere; on His throne in Heaven, ruling the earth, ordering the seasons, bringing the winds out of His treasures, sending the early and the latter rain. This is true, my children, but in a special way He is present with us here. You remember how the prophet Isaiah foretold that a Virgin should have a Son, and call His name Emmanuel. Now that name means *God with us*, and it was given to Jesus Christ because He was, and is, and ever will be, God with us. We cannot see Him dwelling among us as His disciples did, we may not look on Him talking to Martha and Mary in the house at Bethany, or turning the water into wine at Cana of Galilee, or working in the carpenter's shop, or opening the blind man's eyes, but yet Jesus is with us, and always will be, for He is Emmanuel, and He has said, "I am with "you alway, even unto the end of the world." This is the great thought for us to dwell upon at

Chirstmas. Many people seem to forget the true meaning of this holy season. They know it is a time for rejoicing, when good wishes are exchanged, when friends meet, when Churches and houses are decorated. But why is all this? Because we know that Jesus took our flesh at this time, became man as well as God, and still continues God and man for ever. Though He ascended into Heaven, and the bright cloud hid Him from the disciples, He is still Emmanuel, God with us. How and where is He present? I will tell you, my children. He is present in a special way in the hearts of His faithful people. When I see a pure, gentle, loving child, helpful and obedient, modest and unselfish, with Heaven looking out of its eyes, then I know that child's heart is a cradle for the Holy Child Jesus. When I see a man working honestly, humbly, and prayerfully, adorning His labour with the beauty of holiness, then I know that Jesus Christ is present in that man's workshop, as much as He was in the workshop of Joseph down in Galilee. When I see a woman ruling the house well, showing herself forbearing and patient, filling the whole house with the sweet perfume of good temper, then I know that Jesus

Christ is present in that house, just as He was in the house of Martha and Mary at Bethany. If I see a person suffering from some great sorrow, yet resigned and uncomplaining, then I know that Jesus Christ is present there, as surely as when He stood like a sheep silent before her shearers, and bore the scourging, yet opened not His mouth. Thus Jesus is Emmanuel in the hearts of His faithful people. Again, Jesus is Emmanuel, God with us, in His Church, and in the Sacraments of His Church. It would be of no use for us to be here in Church to-day, if Jesus Christ were not present in the midst of us. He was present in Bethlehem, the House of Bread, and He makes this Church a House of Bread to-day. He is present in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, the true Bread which came down from Heaven, and He is present in that other Sacrament of Holy Baptism. Here then is the true secret of our Christmas joy. We have heard the glad tidings of great joy, that unto us a child is born, who is not only God Almighty, but man all sympathy, and that He is in the midst of us, dwelling among us. He came down to us, down from the sapphire floor of Heaven to the poor manger, down from the

crown of glory to the crown of thorns, from His glorious throne to the cruel Cross, from the dazzling robes of Paradise to the coarse swaddling clothes, from His Father's House to the garden grave.

We know then, my children, that we are not alone in the battle of life. Jesus the true Joshua, the great conqueror, leads us, and fights for us; the Lion of the tribe of Judah is on our side, that little Baby, despised and rejected of men, and turned from the inn door, is mightier than all the powers of sin. "Where is He that is "born King of the Jews?" Oh! May we all be able to say, He is with me, in my home, and in my heart,

"Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel."

"Him let old men, Him let young men,
Him let boys in chorus sing;
Matrons, virgins, little maidens,
With glad voices answering;
Let their guileless songs re-echo,
And the heart its praises bring,
Evermore and evermore."

SERMON IV.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

S. MATTHEW II. 16.

"Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under."

IT was a sad day in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood, like that terrible day in Egypt when God slew all the first-born of the Egyptians, and there was no house where there was not one dead. Herod the King of Judæa, the worst of a wicked line of princes, was greatly troubled. It was a little child lying in a manger which troubled him. He had heard and read prophecies that at this time the Messiah, the Christ, should be born, and he had heard Him called the King of the Jews. Though Herod believed that Jesus would be born as the prophets had foretold, he would not believe nor understand that He was the Son of God, and that His kingdom is not of this world. He thought the

little child would grow up to take his throne from him, and so Herod was greatly troubled. One day the king looked forth from his grand palace in Jerusalem, and saw three strangers approaching. They had come from the East to Jerusalem, and they asked everyone whom they met, "Where is He that is born King of the "Jews?" Then King Herod called all the Chief Priests, and rulers of the Jews, and asked where the Saviour, the King of the Jews, would be born. And they told him in the words of the prophet Micah, that He should be born in Bethlehem. Then Herod was more troubled than ever, for Bethlehem was quite near, only five miles off. He tried, however, to deceive the wise men who had come from the East, and asked them to let him know the place where they found Jesus, that he might come and worship Him also. They were warned by God not to return to the wicked king, and the mother of Jesus, and Joseph her husband, carried the young child into Egypt. Thus it was that Herod was enraged, and sent his cruel order that all the little children in Bethlehem and round about, who were under two years old, should be killed. So it was a sad day in Beth-

lehem. Think, my children, of the sorrow, and terror and confusion, which must have filled the once happy village;—it is supposed that at least two hundred little children perished. In one place we may think of a happy home, nestling under the shadow of its vine and fig-tree; the young mother is playing with her infant at the open door, the father is away at his workshop, or minding his sheep in the valley; presently he comes home, longing to see his wife and child. He hears a shout and a cry from his cottage. He rushes forward just in time to see a band of soldiers entering his house, and in another minute he is among them, but too late to save his child; it lies dead, with a smile on its face, and the soldiers go on in search of other victims. In another house a little one is prattling at the knee of his grandfather, the soldiers enter and seize the child roughly, the old man tries to shield his darling, but he is pushed angrily aside, and soon that house is left desolate. And now there is a sound of bitter weeping in the valleys of Bethlehem, and the mourners go about the streets.

Learn now, dear children, how those who fight against God are sure to fail. King Herod is

waiting in his palace at Jerusalem, anxious to hear that the Child Jesus is dead. Presently one of his Captains arrives. The king questions him eagerly. The soldier looks troubled and sorrowful. He tells Herod that the Child Jesus has escaped into safety, and that one of the king's own children has been killed by mistake. Thus was the wicked Herod punished.

Those little children who were killed at Bethlehem are called by the Church the Holy Innocents. If you look in your Prayer Book you will see that the Church always observes the day of their death, and appoints a special Collect, and Gospel and Epistle for it. Those Holy Innocents were the first Martyrs for Jesus Christ. They died for Him that they might live with Him for ever. He lived that He might die for them. Let us see what lessons there are for us from the story of the Holy Innocents. First, I think, we learn that even little children can do something for Jesus Christ. Those infants at Bethlehem were called upon to die for Him, you are not called upon to die, but to *live* for Jesus. And living for Jesus means that you will have to bear many things, and to give up many things, and often to fight against many sins.

"We know the Holy Innocents,
Laid down for Him their infant life,
And martyrs brave and patient saints
Have stood for Him in fire and strife.

We wear the Cross they wore of old,
Our lips have learned like vows to make;
We need not die, we cannot fight,
What may we do for Jesu's sake?

O day by day each Christian child
Has much to do, without, within;
A death to die for Jesu's sake,
A weary war to wage with sin."

And next we learn from this subject a lesson of *innocence.* You, dear children, at your Baptism received a white robe of righteousness, will you not try to keep it unspotted from the world? As you grow older and go forth among men, you will meet with many sins, many temptations, which will stain your white robe if you yield to them. If once your innocence be lost, nothing can give it back. If you handle a butterfly roughly, you destroy the bloom on its wings, and all your sorrow will not restore that lost beauty. So it is with your innocence; once lose that, and all your repentance, all your tears, will not make

you what you were. Think how sad the feelings of a man must be when he is forced to say—

> "Now 'tis little joy,
> To feel I'm farther off from Heaven,
> Than when I was a boy."

Pray, my children, to the Holy Child Jesus, pray that a Little Child may lead you in the paths of innocence, and keep you pure. We learn, too, a lesson of *simplicity*. Now there are some people who despise simplicity, as though it were the same as folly. These people praise those who are keen and cunning, but God speaks differently. He holds up the simplicity of a child as a pattern for all, even for the old. He says, "Unless ye be converted, and become as little "children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom "of Heaven." Try to preserve your simplicity, be simple in your tastes and pleasures, do not be in a hurry to exchange the innocence of childhood for the lessons of the world, lest you are forced to say one day, "Oh! that I were as in the days "of my youth, when the secret of God was upon "my tabernacle."

And once more, to learn a lesson of *trustful humility*. You believe what your parents tell

you; if your father talks to you about the stars, or some mystery of nature, of which you know nothing, you do not doubt the truth of what he teaches you,—"Father says so,"—that is enough for you. Well, God our Father in Heaven takes us children by the hand, and leads us through the world. He tells us the truth in the Bible, and makes the Church our nursing mother. Let us then be humble, and be trustful. There are many things which God tells us which we cannot understand, but our Father says so, the Church our mother, says so, let that be enongh for us.

Let us trust God to give us all we need. You trust to your parents to provide for your wants, trust to God to give you food, and comfort, and help and protection *always*. And now before we part, let us all, young and old, pray that we may be led to follow Jesus as dear children, guarded by His Holy Angels, following the Lamb withersoever he goeth, so that at the last we may be found without fault before His throne on high.

SERMON V.

THE LESSONS OF THE SNOW.

ISAIAH LV. 10.

"The snow from Heaven."

GOD is always preaching to us by the works of nature. You cannot go out into the fields and woods without going to school, the pleasantest of all schools, for God's lessons there are always delightful. Every bud which comes out in your gardens in the spring preaches to you of the resurrection to eternal life. Every summer which brings forth flowers or fruit tells you that you must bring forth the fruit of a holy life, and the flowers of a sweet and gentle disposition. Every harvest time reminds you that God will one day send His angel reapers to gather you in, and will separate the good from the evil. Every leaf which falls in the Autumn whispers to you that you must die: And now that the winter has brought the snow, that too has a sermon for you,

dear children. Let us see what the snow has to teach us. First, we learn how wonderfully God works in the great workshop of the world. The moisture is drawn up from its secret reservoirs, from marsh, and fen, from pond, and river, into the air, and then it is condensed, or formed into clouds : sometimes you see those clouds white and fleecy, looking like flocks of sheep in some far off pasture, sometimes you see them dark and threatening, when the storm is coming on. From those clouds the moisture comes down again to earth to do God's work, to fulfil His word, to make the Earth bring forth and bud, to give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater. No work that God does is done in vain. Not a drop of moisture is wasted, it returns to earth to do its work. By and bye the cold breath of winter breathes upon the rain drops, and they are transfigured, and become white and shining, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them. We learn next from the snow the wonderful, silent, irresistible way in which God works. A snow-flake is one of the weakest instruments by which God fulfils his purpose ; it is only the ghost of a dead and gone rain-drop, the touch of a hand, or the breath of a child will melt it, it falls without sound, it is the

quietest of all workers, and yet no one can stand against the power of the snow. In one or two nights the snow will stop the work which occupied men's brains and hands for years in planning. The mail-train starts for the north with hundreds of letters, for which people are anxiously waiting. The mighty steam-engine can easily draw all that great weight of carriages at immense speed, but the quiet snow stops it, and it must stand still. The great ships which plough their way through the water are blocked by the snow and ice, and all their sails, and their engines are powerless against the silent snow. The king's palace which is being built must wait till the snow has gone, the snow is no respecter of persons. The labourer must sit at home, his strong arms cannot work through the deep snow to dig the ground, all work is stopped by the quiet snow. The swift, bright, bubbling stream by which you played in the summer, is caught by the ice and the snow, and it becomes still and frozen. "Who can "abide His frost?" Yet God who stopped the current of the river can in a few hours set it in motion. "He bloweth with His wind, and the "waters flow." What all the men in the world could not do, God does in a single night. The

snow disappears, silently, swiftly, mysteriously, as it came, when its work is done.

Now, my children, God works on our lives, just as He works with the quiet snow on the earth, mysteriously, and silently, and all powerfully. When you saw the snow covering the ground, you thought perhaps the earth was dead, and that the snow was like a white shroud. You thought perhaps that your garden and all your roots and flowers were dead. But it was not so. The earth was not dead, but sleeping. The snow was like a kind mother, wrapping up the ground, and the roots, and the flowers, in warm white raiment, for you must remember that the earth is very warm under the snow,—and when the sun comes in the spring, the snow will melt away, and become moisture which will give drink to your plants and flowers. So God deals with us in our lives. He is a God who hides Himself, we may not see Him with our eyes face to face, but we may see Him and His works in the summer flowers, and in the winter snow. Silently, surely, He brings His purposes to pass; silently, surely, as the snow comes down from Heaven, and does its work. We think sometimes that we make our own

fortunes, and dig out our own path in life. One morning we get up, and find that our garden path is filled up by the snow, which God has sent in the night, and we cannot go on our way. So one morning we find that our path in life is filled up, and blocked by God's hand. We had made certain plans, we had counted on a certain position, and we had forgotten to ask God about it. And so God in His mercy, knowing what is best for us, comes and stops us in our course, and buries our plan, our scheme, our hope, just as He buries our gardens, and our fields in the snow. Learn then this lesson from the snow, that God is wiser and stronger than we are, and that we may not fight against His will. I want you to learn another lesson from the snow. Underneath the wintry snow God is taking care of the summer flowers and fruits. The corn is there, safe under the snow, and the roses, and the lilies, and the violets are there; that sweet resurrection flower, which you all love, the snowdrop, will be the first to come forth from the grave. Over every root and seed which lies buried in the earth, God has written the words, "I shall rise again," just as He writes them over the grave of all His people.

Well, dear children, God sends us sorrows sometimes, which are like the cold snow, but under the snow of sorrow, He is taking care of flowers for us. Our hopes and our joys may seem to be dead and buried, and all the world may appear black and dreary, like a scene in winter; but just as the flower roots are safe beneath the snow, and waiting God's time to bloom again, so our hopes and joys are safe, and they blossom again with purer, and holier forms than ever. You know that the snow does good to the ground, so the sorrow which God sends upon us, silently and suddenly as He sends the snow, does us good, and preserves us from many sins. I think Jesus leads us to Him, and makes us His own people by means of sorrow, oftener than by means of happiness. We are all too fond of making our life a flower garden of our own planning. We like our *own way*, better than God's way. Then God in His love for us, seeing how foolish we are, comes and covers up our garden with the deep snow of trouble; He takes from us what we loved best, because we loved it better than God, He covers our earthly garden with snow, that we may think more of the Heavenly garden, where we hope to be one day.

Learn yet one more lesson from the snow. We read in the Psalms that "fire and hail, snow and vapours, and stormy wind are fulfilling His word." We see the rain and the snow come down from Heaven, like messengers from God; though they are drunk up by the thirsty roots, and disappear from our sight, yet they are not lost. They are seen again in the green ear of wheat, in the summer leaves of the trees, in the bright flowers, and the ripe fruits of autumn. Thus we learn that every event in our lives, every joy, or sorrow, every gain, or loss, has a work to do for our souls, as the snow has a work to do for the earth. We should learn to look at everything which we do as a fulfilling of God's will. As every flake of snow has its appointed work, so every word and deed of ours has its appointed work, and all these things are noted in God's book. Every little act of unselfishness, every little fight with sin, every struggle against temptation, though no one knows of it in earth, is treasured up by God in Heaven, and shall bear fruit. So too, every mean, or cruel, and selfish act or speech, every secret lie, or hidden sin, brings its reward, and comes back like the black, bitter frost which kills. Your influence also over others, comes down in the

nursery, or the school like the snow, gently but surely. Dear children, take care that your influence comes like the gentle rain or the quiet snow, for good, fulfilling God's word. Try for the future to learn from the rain which cometh down from Heaven, and the snow, the truth that they have their work, and that you have your work, and that they are both the same, to do the will of God.

SERMON VI.

FIGHTING THE GIANT.

1 SAMUEL XVII. 29.

"And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?"

A GREAT battle is going to be fought. Two armies are drawn up in front of each other. On the one side are the banners of Saul, and Jonathan his son, so we know that that is the army of Israel. On the other side are the banners of Gath, and Gaza, and Ascalon, so we know that that is the side of the Philistines. The scene is a valley called Elah, which belongs to the tribe of Benjamin, and the armies stand on either side of the valley on a hill. It is a time of continual war between Israel and the Philistines. God's people are badly governed by brave, disobedient Saul, and the times are changed since Joshua, and Gideon, and Samson led out their people to victory. The two armies are waiting for the signal to begin the fight. Presently the Philistines

suggest a duel between two champions, instead of a general battle. Such a way of deciding a dispute was very common formerly. In your Roman history you will read how three noble Romans called the Horatii, fought with three other noble youths of a neighbouring state to decide which of the two countries should be the chief. So now the Philistines sent forth their champion to fight for them, and he was no common soldier. He was a giant, for "there were "giants in the earth in those days,"—and he was ten and a half feet high. Saul, king of Israel, was a tall man, but he must have looked like a child beside the Philistine Goliath. For forty days this giant had stood in front of the army, and had defied the children of Israel, and no one dared fight with him. There were many brave men there, but they thought they were no match for Goliath, Saul even was not tall enough for that mighty champion. God, however, found a champion to fight for His people. Who was this? Was it the best soldier in the army? Was it another giant like the Philistine? No, it was a ruddy-faced shepherd boy, whose name was David, who had come up from the sheepfolds at Bethlehem to see his brethren. God often

chooses strange instruments to do His work. He chose the little Hebrew servant-maid, who waited on Naaman's wife, to bring that great captain to the true God, and to get him cured of his leprosy. He chose a weak woman to kill Abimelech. He chose a few ignorant fishermen to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So now He chose David to rid Israel of Goliath the giant. Look at the two champions. There is Goliath full of strength, and cruelty, and wickedness, armed to the teeth. There too is David, strong in the Lord, the breeze blowing his long fair hair about his shoulders. His eye is unflinching, though he has never seen a battle before; instead of the helmet of brass, and the spear as heavy as a weaver's beam, he has only his shepherd's staff, and the sling, and the stones. But David *knows his weapons*, and in whose strength he must fight. Saul had offered him his armour, but David would not use it, because he had not proved it. There is breathless expectation in both armies, and the children of Israel tremble for their young champion. The sling, which he had learned to use among the hills of Bethlehem, is firmly grasped, the stone flies from it, God gives the aim, and the giant falls with a crash to the earth. And

there is weeping in the cities of the Philistines, and the cry is, "tell it not in Gath, publish it "not in the streets of Ascalon,"—for Goliath shall go forth with the armies no more for ever.

Now I have told you this story, my children, because you all have giants to fight against, giants worse even than Goliath, of Gath. This world is like the valley of Elah, and there are giants always coming and defying God's children, the army of the living God. You little children are part of that great army. You were enlisted at Holy Baptism, when the promise was made, a promise which you repeat at confirmation, that you would be Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end. When David came down to fight the giant, he said, "Is there not "a cause?" You may all say the same. You have a cause to fight for; sometimes countries go to war with each other from very wrong causes, but yours is the best, the noblest, the most glorious cause. You fight for salvation, your own, and that of others. The soldier fights for his king and country; you fight for the King of kings, and for the better country, which is the heavenly. The battle which you have to fight is the hardest of all battles. That was a hard fight

when the Normans swept up the hill at Hastings, and our own Saxon King Harold fell with the cruel arrow in his eye. That was a hard fight when the Old Guard charged at Waterloo. That was a hard fight when the Six Hundred rode into the valley of death at Balaklava. Your fight is harder still, it continues all through your life, and when you are wounded, it is your souls, not your bodies only which suffer. Your battle is with giants. There is that giant of wickedness, the Devil, who desires to rob you of Heaven. He fights with you in different ways, with the arrows of evil thoughts, with the hard blows of strong temptation, with the cunning wiles of self-deception. The wounds which he inflicts are worse than the keenest sword, or the most cruel bayonet. Then there are other giants in his train. The *sins* which beset you, these, my children, are the giants against whom you have to fight. You know some of the names of these giants. There is *bad temper*, that dark and evil giant, which grows stronger every day if it is not conquered; making home-life or school-life miserable, spoiling your work, and poisoning your play, till he is crushed. There is *disobedience*, that proud and self-willed giant, far greater and

stronger than Goliath, which separates you from the love of your friends and parents, and worst of all, from the love of God. There is *selfishness*, that giant which robs you of every kind, and noble, and generous feeling, and keeps you from doing good to others. There is *impurity*, a giant of foul and hideous look, which increases in stature and power every time you yield to it, till at last it gets the mastery over you, and you become its miserable slaves. And there are many other giants whose names I need not mention now. Against these you must fight, or they will conquer you. But you will say, How can we weak children overcome these giants of strength? Do you think David the shepherd boy could have conquered Goliath by his own power? Do you think his staff and his sling would have prevailed against the shield of brass, and the mighty spear and sword of the Philistine? No, David triumphed because he trusted in the Lord, because he felt "the Lord is on my side, I will not fear "what man doeth unto me." Take him as your example when your are called upon to fight with the giants. First, do not fight in armonr which you have not tried. Do not trust to your good name, or your harmless life, or your knowledge

of the Bible, or your attendance at Church. When you think you are strong, you are most weak. Go to the battle in the strength which God gives you, go in the armour which Jesus sends you. That armour has been proved. It was proved in the temptation; it was proved in the garden of Gethsemane; it was proved on the Cross of Calvary. We shall be more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Take the staff of Christ's love, and the sling of Faith, and the stone of Prayer, and put upon you the whole armour of God. Remember the giants fight in different ways; there are sins which are open and violent, which come right at us. Others creep and crawl among us like serpents. Some hide away like moths in secret corners, and these are the most dangerous of all. Do not grow weary of the fight, dear children, dear soldiers of Jesus Christ. A time will come when you may say with that brave old soldier, S. Paul, "I have fought a "good fight, I have finished my course, I have "kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for "me a crown of righteousness." Fight to win that crown. Go, and the Lord be with you.

SERMON VII.

WEEDS AND FLOWERS.

SOLOMON'S SONG V. 1.

"I am come into my garden."

YOU must all have noticed the difference between a well-kept, and an ill-kept garden. In the one you find beauty, order, and sweetness, in the other are disorder, wildness, and desolation. In a well-kept garden the plants are arranged in order, some to give shade with cool green leaves, some to give beauty to the scene with bright colours, some to support the weaker flowers, others to send forth sweet scent. But in a neglected garden the weeds have it all their own way. Ill weeds, you know, grow apace, and they soon choke the good seed, and hide the flowers from sight, and instead of sweetness, give forth poisonous berries. Now, dear children, your life is like a garden, Christian graces and virtues are the flowers, our sins and evil habits are the weeds.

You know what kind of garden God would have your life to be, a sweet, fair flower garden, full of beauty and fragrance. Your life began at Holy Baptism, when you were made God's children. Then the seeds of all good flowers were sown in your hearts. It is our enemy the devil who plants the foul weeds in our life garden. Now our life garden is not our own to do what we like with, Jesus is the Lord of it, for He purchased it at a price. Think what it cost Jesus to redeem your life, to make your garden His, and to plant it with beautiful flowers. It costs much money to lay out and beautify a garden; the hanging gardens of Babylon in old times, and the palace gardens of kings in these days were planted at vast expense. But it cost Jesus, the Lord of our gardens, far more. Silver and gold could not purchase what He came to buy. To make our life-gardens beautiful it cost Jesus thirty-three years of toil and pain on earth; it cost Him poverty, and insult, and agony, and at last a cruel death. The seed for our gardens was gathered on a blood-stained Cross. Since we are bought with a price, since Jesus suffered so much to plant our gardens, He naturally looks for *a return*. He expects fruits and flowers, sweet-

ness and beauty in our lives. He comes and looks into our hearts and sees what thoughts are there. He comes and looks into our lives and sees how we are spending our time, He says, "I am "come into my garden." Dear children, Jesus is watching your lives. He sees you in the school and in the playground, at home, and abroad, "He is about your path, and about your bed, and "spieth out all your ways." What does the Lord see in your life-garden, is it planted with weeds, or flowers, or rather, have you let the weeds grow and choke the flowers? I fear we shall find many tangled, troublesome, unsightly plants growing in our garden. There is the prickly thorn of *ill-temper*, which wounds every one who comes near it, and the deadly night-shade of *impurity*, which poisons all around it, and many another evil weed. Let us think of some of the best of flowers for our life-garden, that it may be altogether lovely, and such as our dear Saviour would have it. There is *obedience*, a sweet and comely flower, bowing its head humbly, and giving forth a sweet smell. No flower is better for a child's garden. Remember the obedience of the Child Jesus, "He went "down with His parents to Nazareth, and was

"subject to them," and yet He was their *God.* If your gardens are to be acceptable in God's eyes, obedience must be chief among the flowers. Look now into your heart and think what you have said and done during the last week, or last month, have you been obedient to your parents, to your teachers, have you been obedient to your *God?* I think you will find that ugly weed *disobedience* growing in some neglected corner of your garden. Let us pluck it up at once by the roots. If it remains it will spread its seed and increase a hundredfold. If you were disobedient last week, you will be more so this week, if that weed is not plucked up. But you will say, how can I get rid of this weed. I could pluck up a handful of weeds from my little garden at home, easily enough, but I cannot overcome this obstinate growth *disobedience.* You are right, my children, you are not strong enough alone to do this. You must call in some one stronger than you to help you in weeding your garden; you must ask God to send you the help of His Holy Spirit, for Jesus Christ's sake, you must pray for strength to be given you to overcome this evil sin, and then God will plant the sweet flower of obedience, where once the foul

weed grew. Another flower which must be in your garden is *modesty*. You have all noticed how the sweet violets hide themselves from sight, growing close to the ground, and giving forth their perfume from a nest of dark green leaves. Some of you may think that you would like to have tall, showy flowers in your garden, but remember that none of these showy flowers are as sweet as the violet. Many of you may have to occupy a humble place in life, where few people will notice you, or hear of you; well, try to make your quiet corner of the world sweet with the virtue of modesty, just as the sweetest corner of the flower garden is where the modest violet hides itself. Another flower for your garden, my children, must be *contentment*. You have all seen that beautiful, old-fashioned flower, the Hearts-ease. Well, take care to have that in your garden, contentment, you know, is Hearts-ease. You can never be happy in life if the weed of discontent is growing among your flowers. Everything in your garden will look dark and miserable, if that evil weed spreads over it.

You all love the delicate white snowdrops, which come out when no other flower is seen. They are pure and spotless as the snow from

which they take their name. There is a flower like them which you must have in your life-garden, it is called *Purity*. Jesus says, "Blessed "are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now, dear children, it is very hard sometimes to keep ourselves pure, because there are many impure things in the world, like deadly weeds, which would kill the fair flowers in our life-garden. I have called impurity the *deadly night-shade*, because like that plant it appears pleasant to the eye, but it is poison all the same. Never forget to pray that the pure and holy Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, may help you to keep yourselves pure, unspotted from the world.

What do you think is the best flower in the flower garden. I think we shall agree that the Rose is the queen of the flowers. It is not only beautiful, but it is also sweet. Well, there is a flower like the rose which we should have in our life-garden, that is *Love*. Love gives beauty to life, and love gives sweetness to life. Why is it that the world of nature is lovely, made up of bright flowers, and green woods, and sparkling rivers, and clustering fruit? It is because *God is love*, and He is ever showing His love in a beautiful world. If we are God's children we

must show love one towards another. A loving child in a school or a home, is like a rose in a garden, it fills the place with sweetness, and with beauty. There are many other flowers which we should have in our garden, and many other weeds which we must try to root up, but I will leave you to think of these for yourselves. I will only tell you now to ask Jesus, the Lord of the garden, to plant day by day new flowers for you, and to water them with His mercy, and make them grow; so that your gardens may become more beautiful day by day, till at last you shall be transplanted to that fair garden above, where no weeds are, and where the flowers fade not for ever and ever.

SERMON VIII.

TELLING JESUS.

S. MATTHEW XIV. 12.

"His disciples . . . . went and told Jesus."

MY children, there is nothing in this world like *sympathy*. Do you know what that word sympathy means? It means to *feel with another*, to enter into his feelings, whether of joy or sorrow. The joys of life are twice as good, the sorrows of life are only half as heavy, if they are shared with some one else. If you gain a prize at school, or receive a present, your first thought is to shew it to your parents and friends, that they may rejoice with you. If you are in trouble you run to those who love you, and what you expect from them is *sympathy*. Who would care to possess all the gold and silver in the world and have no friends? Once a man was shipwrecked, and lost on an island, a beautiful place, full of

fruits and flowers, where he was "Monarch of all he surveyed," yet we are told that he would rather have lived at home with a friend however humble, than have been a king with no one to sympathise with him. Have you ever thought how terrible it would be to live without a friend in the world; to feel that no one cared about you, or took any interest in you? Well, there is something worse even than that, and that is to be without *God in the world*; and there are many people, even in our own land, who live without God in the world, and never pray to Him, never think of Him. You, my children, have been taught differently, and I want you now to try and understand that Jesus Christ sympathises with you in all you do, in your joys, and in your sorrows, and that therefore, you are never alone in the world, since He is with you always, even unto the end of the world. I want you to come very close to Jesus, to feel as though He held you by the hand, or as though you were lying on His breast, as the blessed S. John did. Have you not felt that Jesus is far away from you in heaven, and that you were sending your prayers to Him a long way off, like letters sent to Australia? Now I want you to alter this, and

to try and feel that Jesus is a friend *who is close to you*, a guest who comes home to your houses, a Brother who feels for you; and then I would have you in all your sorrows, and joys, all your sins and troubles, go and tell Jesus.

In times of joy and prosperity, go, and tell Jesus. Why? Because He gives you this prosperity. An ungodly man talks about his *luck*, if he is successful, and grumbles at his bad *luck* if he falls into trouble; do not you do this, my dear children, the same God sends the sunshine and the cloud, the joy and the sorrow, and when your time of happiness comes, go and tell Jesus, and ask Him to make you thankful.

It is not always good for us to be prosperous, any more than it is good for us to be always in the sunshine. David says, "before I was "troubled, I went wrong," and I fear a great many people are ruined by being what is called prosperous in the world, because they forget to thank God. When all things are bright and happy around you, go and tell Jesus, and ask Him how to use your happiness rightly.

In the time of sorrow and trouble, go, and tell Jesus. Ah! dear children, to whom can you go better than to Him, the Man of sorrows. Is any

sorrow of ours greater than His sorrow? We may lose our home, or our money, but He left Heaven to lead a homeless life on earth. We may have to work hard, but not harder than Jesus worked. We may lose our friends, He lost Lazarus, and the rest forsook Him and fled. We may think ourselves neglected, and misunderstood, but not by the whole world, as He was. Go then, and tell Jesus your troubles. There is not a aching heart for which He does not feel; there is not a sob which does not find an echo with Him, there are no sad tears which He does not count, and treasure up. We cannot live long in this world without knowing sorrow, we soon find that this is not Heaven where all tears are wiped away. You children have your griefs, and losses, your trials and disappointments. Some of you, perhaps, have seen the shadow of death creep over your home. Some little play-fellow, "some wee white-rose of all the world," has been taken from you, and you have seen him laid in the grave, to sleep in that cradle which needs no rocking. How could you bear that bitter sorrow, if you could not go and tell Jesus about it? You will not be able to part with those you love, unless you believe that Jesus is the Resurrection

and the Life, and that He is stronger than death, and will raise up our dear ones again at the last day. Go and tell Jesus your grief, and He will teach you that the souls of those who left us are living still, and that their bodies are safe in the churchyard, sown like seed in God's garden. Then we shall learn to say :—

"She is not dead,—the child of our affection,
But gone unto that school,
Where she no longer needs our poor protection,
And Christ Himself doth rule.

In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

Day after day we think what she is doing
In those bright realms of air;
Year after year, the tender steps pursuing,
Behold her grown more fair."

Again, *in the little troubles of daily life*, go, and tell Jesus. You know earthquakes do not come every day, neither do great sorrows, but every day brings its little care, or anxiety. These little frets and worries are like little moths

fretting a garment, they make the white robe of our righteousness full of holes. They make us fretful and discontented, they sharpen our tongues, and make us quarrelsome; well, if we are to bear these little worries, and trials properly, and not to sin about them, we must go and tell Jesus. There is nothing too small for Him to take notice of. He knows your childish sorrows, my children, He knows your childish temptations, He knows the troubles of school-life and of home-life. He understands the sort of battle which every child has to fight, and the sort of cross which every child has to bear; He is never tired of hearing about your difficulties, and He is always ready to come and help you. When you have sinned, and feel miserable, when you are dissappointed and feel cast down, when you are tempted, and do not know how to act, never forget that you have an all-loving Saviour who can forgive sins, a sympathising friend who can cheer, a wise counsellor who can advise, *Go, and tell Jesus.*

SERMON IX.

CHRIST ALL IN ALL.

(LENT.)

COLOSSIANS III. 11.
"Christ is all, and in all."

YOU know that our Lord Jesus Christ is called by many different names in the Bible. Let us try and remember some of these names. He is called the Lamb of God,—the Wonderful,—the Counsellor—the Mighty Lord,—the Light of the World,—the Lily of the Valley,—the Rose of Sharon,—the True Vine,—the Bread of Heaven,—the Children's Bread,—the Friend of Publicans and sinners,—the Good Shepherd,—the Bright and Morning Star,—the Bridegroom,—the Resurrection and the Life. He is called also the Captain of Salvation,—the Captain of the Lord's Host,—the Deliverer,—the Desire of all nations,—the Head of the Church,—the Precious Stone,—the Faithful Witness,—the Judge of quick and dead,—the Prince of Peace,—the

Saviour. There are many more titles by which Jesus is known, you must try to find these for yourselves. In the text S. Paul takes all the names of our Lord, and makes one name out of them. He wants us to understand that Jesus is all love, and all power, and all beauty, and all purity, and all sweetness, and all comfort, and all gentleness, and all glory, so he says "Christ "is all, and in all." Now, my children, to a worldly man *money* is all, and to a glutton *eating and drinking* are all, and to an ambitious man *success* is all, and to a vain man *praise* is all, but to a real Christian *Jesus* is all. Take your Bible and study it, and you will find that Christ is all, and in all there. I do not speak now of the New Testament only, I speak of the whole Bible. Perhaps you think that you can only read about Jesus Christ in the four Gospels, and in the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, and the Book of Revelation. But this is not so. You can read about him in Genesis, and in Exodus, and in Deuteronomy, and in the Psalms, and in Isaiah, and in every book of the old Testament as well as in the Gospels; because the whole Bible is God's Book, and that Book was given to us that we might learn about His Son. I

dare say on a sunny day you have noticed how "coming events cast their shadows before," how the shadows of people are cast upon a wall or glass, or window, before you see their actual bodies. Well, in the Old Testament you see the shadow of Jesus Christ, in the New Testament you see the substance.

For example, when you read about the brasen serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness, so that the poor dying Israelites might look on it and be cured, you see there a shadow of Jesus Christ, who was lifted up on the Cross, in the wilderness of this world, that those who are dying in trespasses and sin, may look unto Him, and be healed. When you read how God sent manna, the bread from Heaven, to feed His people, you see there a shadow of Jesus, who came to be the True Bread from Heaven, and who feeds His people in the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood. When you hear about the ark in which Noah and his family were saved in the flood, you see a shadow of Jesus who is a place to hide us in, and who puts us in the ark of His Church, where we are safe from the flood of wickedness and unbelief around us. The story of Joshua, the brave captain, shows you a shadow

of Jesus, whose name is the same as Joshua, the *Saviour*, and reminds you that He is the Captain of our salvation, who shall subdue all our enemies under us. As often as you are told how the Paschal Lamb, was offered at the Feast of the Passover, without spot or blemish, as an atonement for the people, you find a shadow of Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God, in whom was no sin, who was offered as a sacrifice for us at the Passover time on the Cross of Calvary. Look at the Psalms, and you will find David speaking of Jesus, when he tells us how "they pierced my hands and my feet, they "parted my garments among them, and on my "vesture did they cast lots." Who does Isaiah mean when he says, "he was despised and "rejected of men, a man of sorrow, and "acquainted with grief, surely he hath borne our "griefs, and carried our sorrows;—He was "wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised "for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace "was upon him, and with His stripes we are "healed?" You know, my children, that this is none other than Jesus of whom the prophet speaks. Thus you see that, "Christ is all" in the Old Testament. Now look into the New

Testament. There you will find "Christ is all," no longer the shadow, but the substance. You see Him walking on earth, and you are never tired of hearing "that sweet story of old,

How Jesus came down among men."

You see Him at the marriage feast, by the bedside of the ruler's little daughter, weeping by the grave of Lazarus. You will find Him too in the miracles, and in the parables, and the sermons of the Gospel,—"Christ all, and in all." When you read about the water changed into wine at Cana, you should think how Jesus changes our poor nature from the water of weakness, to the strong wine of holiness. When you read of Him feeding the people in the wilderness by bread, given by a miracle, you should remember how He feeds us in the Holy Communion by food given by a miracle. The *seed*, which the sower in the parable went forth to sow, is Christ's Word, the mustard seed which is small, and grows into a large plant, is His Church, the leaven which made the meal swell and increase, is His grace in our hearts. You would not care so much about the story of the good Samaritan, if you did not believe that it was a story about Jesus. You would grow tired of hearing of the

dresser of the vineyard, and the master and the talents, and the prodigal son, if you could not find the likeness of Jesus in everyone of these "earthly stories, with a Heavenly meaning."

Again, who is it that S. Paul, and S. Peter, and S. James, and S. John, are always talking about in their letters? Surely it is always Jesus.

When we come to the last book in the Bible, the Book of the Revelation of S. John, who is He who is seated on the throne, and on whose head are many crowns? It is Jesus, the beginning and end of the Bible, "Christ all, "and in all."

My children, you have all been taught to read your Bible, and to love it, but if it is to be real use to you, you must read with one great purpose, to see Jesus in it. You can find history in your Bible, and very interesting history, and you can find poetry there, very beautiful poetry, but this is not enough, this will not tell you how your souls are to be saved. You may learn a lesson of sweet unselfishness from the story of Ruth, a lesson of loving devotion from the story of the little Hebrew maid, a lesson of patience from the life of Job, a lesson of faithful friendship from the example of Jonathan,

but you want something more than all this, these life stories, beautiful as they are, will not show you the way of salvation. We must see the Babe of Bethlehem, and the Saviour on Calvary, we must see the cradle and the cross, all through the Bible, "Christ all, and in all." Read your Bible for the future as those who seek in a mine for precious jewels, look for Jesus everywhere; learn to say as those strangers said who came to the feast, "we would see Jesus," and learn to feel that for you, "Christ is all, and in all."

SERMON X.

THE DESPISED AND REJECTED.

(LENT.)

1 SAMUEL X. 27.

"But the children of Belial said, how shall this man save us? and they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace."

THE children of Israel had God for their King, yet they were not satisfied. They forgot how He had brought them out of Egypt, with a mighty hand, and a stretched out arm, and how he led them through the wilderness like a flock. They lightly regarded the Most High, neither kept they his great goodness in remembrance. They forgot His mighty acts, His wondrous works in the land of Ham, and fearful things by the Red Sea. The Manna,—the angels' food, the rock smitten in Horeb, the patience of Moses, the wise counsel of Joshua, were all forgotten. The people asked for an earthly King, and He was

given. Samuel, by God's command, made the tribes of Israel pass before him, that he might know whom God had chosen; and the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. Then all the families of the tribe of Benjamin passed before him, and the choice fell on one family, and then all the members of that family passed before him, and Saul, the son of Kish, was chosen. And so Saul stood forth among the people, in his youth, and strength, and beauty, his mighty head towering above all, — that head which was to lie low enough one day, on the blood-stained field of Gilboa. And the people shouted, "God save "the King;"—yet even then they were not content: no sooner had they got a King than they deserted him; a few whose hearts God had touched, remained with him, but the rest said, "how shall this man save us? And they des- "pised him, and brought him no presents, but "he held his peace."

Now I want you to look very closely into this Bible story. What do you see first? You see how foolish and fickle the Israelites were, first, to refuse God, and then, to refuse the King whom they had asked for. But look again, and I think you will see Jesus Christ in this story.

You will see Him of whom Isaiah says, "He "was despised and rejected of men."

Let us try, my children, to follow out the story step by step. The tribes of Israel passed before Samuel, and Saul was chosen to be the Saviour of the people. All the tribes of the earth, and the angels and powers of Heaven, passed before the eyes of God the Father, yet not one of them was chosen to be the Saviour of mankind. "It cost more to redeem their souls." Jesus, the only Son of God, was alone found worthy to be the Redeemer of the world. I think I see Jesus standing in Jerusalem among the people, as Saul had stood long ago; if Saul excelled in beauty and stature, how must Jesus have looked? He who is fairer than the children of men, who is altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand, — how must He have looked? No one has ever yet painted the face of Jesus as we could wish to have it, because all the tints of the rainbow, all the colours with which God lights up the sky, are too dim to describe the features of God's Son. There is an old story which tells us that when our Lord was on His way to die on the Cross, and His face was bathed with the sweat of agony and weari-

ness, a holy maiden named Veronica came forward and wiped His face with a napkin, and the likeness of the divine features, was, by a miracle, printed on the cloth of the ministering woman. I wish we could believe that story, how precious would that picture be: but we may not, since it is only a story. Well, I look in imagination, and I see the King in His beauty, standing among the people. Some of them shout "Hosanna! Blessed is He who cometh in the "name of the Lord,"—just as they shouted "God save the King" for Saul.

But most of them have another cry,—"Away "with Him,—crucify Him, we will not have this "man to reign over us,—how can this man save "us!" So they despised Him, and brought Him "no presents. "*How shall this man save us?*" So thought the Jewish shepherds when they came to Bethlehem, and saw a little infant lying in a manger. How shall this feeble babe save us, they thought. So thought the people in Galilee, when they saw Jesus working in Joseph's workshop. "Is not this the carpen-"ter's Son?" they said. Shall those hands which handle the craftsman's hammer be stretched forth to save us, they thought. They looked

for a Messiah, a Christ, who should come in pomp and great glory, and behold, He was meek and lowly. They expected a diadem of gems, and, behold, a crown of thorns. They looked for a splendid throne, and behold, a rough Cross. "How shall this man save us?" So some people talk now. They will not believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that He died to redeem us from our sins, and rose again for our justification, and ascended into Heaven to prepare a place for us.

"*They despised Him.*" If that was true of Saul, how much more true of Jesus! The Jews insulted and mocked Him; they said, "He hath "a devil."—They spat on Him, and smote Him with the palms of their hands.

So it is now, many people despise the Lord Jesus Christ. There are *proud* people who despise Christ's religion because it teaches them to be *humble.* A man who is proud of his learning, is told that he must become as a little child, if he would be saved, and he is angry. A man who is proud of his money, is told that it is more blessed to give than to receive, and he is angry. A man who is proud of his righteousness, is told to confess his sins humbly, and esteem others

better than himself, so he is angry too, and says, "I am as good as my neighbour." A man wants to do some great thing for religion, and he is told,—"Go, wash in the waters of baptism, wash "you, make you clean.—Come, eat of the flesh "of the Son of man, and drink His blood, or you "have no life in you."—But he cries, "What! "A little water wash away sin? A little bread "and wine give life!" And so he goes away in a rage, and despises the meek teaching of the meek and gentle Jesus.

"*They brought him no presents.*" That was true of Saul, more true still of Jesus. No presents for Him! There were gold, and purple and fine linen for Dives, and Pilate and Cæsar, only coarse swaddling clothes for their Master. There were ivory palaces, and gilded houses for them, but no room at the inn for Him. There were silken hangings, and beams of cedar for the Temple, but only rough garments and a carpenter's shop for the *Temple's God.* They brought Him no presents. Of all the Kings in the earth, only three came at Epiphany with their gifts. Of all the women in Judæa, only one gave the ointment; Joseph ministered to Him, but it was only to lend Him a grave when He was dead.

Now, dear children, what of ourselves? Do we give Jesus presents? Perhaps you will think men cannot give anything to God who possesses all things; perhaps you will say that little children can give no presents to Jesus. Our Saviour tells us differently. He says that when we give anything to *His poor*, we give it to Him; so every little act of kindness shown to the needy, and the sorrowful, is a present made to Jesus Christ. When you give anything to the Church to make it more beautiful, you give a present to Jesus Christ. When you gather flowers to decorate the Altar, when you give your time and your talents to the choir, when you play the organ, or try to teach in the Sunday School, then you are bringing a present to Jesus Christ. Nothing that you offer to Jesus is too poor or small for Him to accept as a present, if it be the gift of love. Let me tell you a story to illustrate this. Once upon a time, a great Emperor named Justinian determined to build a beautiful Church to the glory of God. He was anxious that no one else should contribute to the work, that all the credit should be his. When this Church was finished, he ordered a marble slab to be set up, bearing this inscription:—"Justinian, the

"Emperor, gave this Church to God." On the day of the consecration, the Emperor went in state to the Church of S. Sophia, full of pride at what he had done. Suddenly, when he looked at the marble slab, he saw that the inscription was changed, and it now stood thus:—"Euphrasia "the widow gave this Church to God." Then Justinian was very angry, and accused the sculptor of carving a wrong inscription, but the artist assured him that he had done what he had been commanded, and that the words could only have been changed by a miracle. Justinian wondering at all this, commanded Euphrasia to be brought before him, and after a time, a very poor widow was led in. The Emperor asked her sternly what she had done for the Church, and why she had disobeyed his orders. The widow answered that she lived by the waterside, and had been very ill, and God had relieved her of her pain. She had been anxious to show her gratitude, and when she saw the oxen drawing up the marble blocks for the Church, she had plucked a little straw from her poor bed and given it them for food, and that was all. Then the eyes of Justinian were opened, and he understood how God had accepted the widow's mite,

the gift of love and gratitude, and refused his costly work, which was the gift of pride.

Try then, my children, to bring presents to Jesus, do something for Him, for His poor, for His Church, give Him the present which He loves best, *your heart*, try "to present yourselves, your "souls, and bodies, a living sacrifice unto Him."

Once more, "*he held his peace.*" That was true of Saul, true also of Jesus. It has been said that speech is like silver, but silence is golden. That was golden silence indeed, when Jesus stood before His enemies as a sheep dumb before her shearers, and opened not His mouth. Let us pray that we may be like Him in this, that when troubles vex us, cruel speeches excite us, and enemies speak evil of us, we may be able to keep our mouths as it were with a bridle, and hold our peace.

SERMON XI.

THE GREAT SIGHT.

(GOOD FRIDAY.)

EXODUS III. 3.

"I will now turn aside, and see this great sight."

I WANT each one of you, my children, to echo these words, and say to himself, "*I* will now turn "aside, and see this great sight." Turn aside from what? From the thoughts and works of the world, from the cares and pleasures of the day; and to see what great sight? The greatest, the most wonderful, the most glorious, and yet the most terrible of sights.

Do you know why this is called Good Friday, why the Church is hung in solemn mourning? Because it is the day when Jesus Christ died on the Cross. This is the great sight which I want to turn aside and see, Jesus dying on the Cross. Try to turn your thoughts aside from the world, from your work, from your play, and fix them upon the dying Son of God. Where must we look upon this great sight? We must turn our

thoughts to a spot outside the gates of Jerusalem, a slightly rising ground, called, probably from its shape, *Golgotha*, the place of a skull. It was the spot where criminals were put to death. Thither they take Jesus, the sinless One, bearing His own Cross. His body is yet bleeding from the cruel scourges of the soldiers. He is worn out by sorrow, and pain, and suffering, and insult. Only a little while since He was praying in the Garden, where His enemies found Him, and, led by the traitor Judas, took Him prisoner. Since then He has been brought before Pontius Pilate, the Governor, and before Herod; He has been mocked and set at nought by the rough soldiers, all His disciples have forsaken Him, and even S. Peter has thrice denied Him. Now utterly forsaken, crowned with cruel thorns, He is going to die a slow and horrible death. He is nailed by the hands and feet to a Cross, and on either side of Him is another Cross, on which hangs a thief.

"Look on His Head, that bleeding Head,
With crown of thorns surrounded;
Look on His sacred Hands and Feet
Which piercing nails have wounded;
See every limb with scourges rent;
On Him, the Just, the Innocent,
What malice hath abounded."

This is the great sight which I would have you look upon. It is a great sight, because it shows us a great mystery. God knows all things, and can do all things in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, yet He allowed the world to go on sinning for ages till He sent a Saviour to redeem it. Then whom did He send? Greater mystery still, He sent His own Son into the world, to take our nature, to be like us, only without sin; and more mysterious still, although Jesus was without sin, yet He suffered for sin, and died for sin, but not for His own. The whole world was lying in wickedness, and the wages of sin is death. All men have been, and still are born in sin, and all had committed sin, and so sentence of death had been pronounced on all. Jesus redeemed the world from that sentence by dying Himself, the Just for the unjust. Here then is a great mystery. God so loved the world that He pardoned those who had sinned against Him, and the price of that pardon was the death of His only Son. Jesus is God as well as man, therefore He is Almighty, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, yet He allowed a petty Roman Governor to condemn Him. All the Angels in Heaven form His army, yet He permitted a few soldiers to take

Him prisoner. He is the Prince of Life, yet He died; and all this was done that He might save you and me, and all who have lived, and all who are yet to live, from their sins, and might open the gates of Heaven to all believers. O wonderful mystery, O great sight indeed! Now you know why Jesus suffered so terribly on the Cross, now you know why His heart broke. It was not the crown of thorns, and the keen nails which killed Him, it was the weight of sin, the sins of the whole world.

Again, it is a great sight on which we look to-day, because in it all the prophecies are fulfilled. Jesus, the seed of the woman, has bruised the head of the serpent, that old serpent the Devil, by conquering the power of sin; now in Jesus, the seed of Abraham, all the nations of the earth are blessed. The star, which Balaam foretold, has come out of Jacob, and the sceptre has arisen out of Israel. The familiar friend in whom He trusted, has lifted up his heel against Jesus, as David long ago foretold. As Isaiah prophesied, the eyes of the blind have been opened, and the ears of the deaf have been unstopped; Jesus has been despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with

grief. He has been wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we have been healed. As said the prophet Zachariah, the King has come to the daughter of Zion, lowly, and riding upon an ass; and they have weighed for His price thirty pieces of silver, and they have looked on Him whom they pierced. They have parted His garments among them, and cast lots upon His vesture; He has made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death,—for we know they laid Him in the rich man's sepulchre,—all has been fulfilled which God spake by the mouth of His holy Prophets, which have been since the world began.

Again, this is a *great sight*, because in it all the types of Jesus are fulfilled. I have told you, my children, that many persons and things in the Old Testament are types, or signs, or shadows of our Lord. As in Adam all men die, so Jesus has become the *Second Adam* in whom all are made alive. Jesus, the true *Noah*, has brought an Ark to save us from the flood of sin, even His holy Church. Jesus, the true *Isaac*, has been born the Child of Promise, and been obedient unto death, and carried the wood for His own

sacrifice, unto the mount of death. Jesus has come as the true *Melchizedek*, a Priest, a Prophet, and King, the King of Peace; He, the true *Joseph*, the dearly beloved Son, has been hated of His brethren, to whom He has been sent; though born late in time, He has inherited the birthright; Judas or Judah, (the same name,) has sold Him for money, He has been falsely accused by a false witness, He has been bound between two malefactors, He has given life to one malefactor, death to another, He has ministered to the spirits in prison, He has been raised the third day, every knee has been bowed before Him, He has fed the hungry with good things, and has departed to the far off heavenly Goshen, to prepare a place for those who were once His enemies. Jesus, the true Aaron, has made an atonement for the people, He has stood between the living and the dead, and the plague is staid. He, the true Joshua, (Joshua and Jesus are the same names, and mean Saviour,) has led us to victory against our enemy; He, the Captain of our Salvation, will carry us across the Jordan of death to the good land of Paradise beyond. Jesus, the true David, has conquered Satan, the giant of wickedness; and now, as the Good

Shepherd, He leads His people through green pastures, and beside still waters. Jesus, the true Manna, the Bread from Heaven, has given Himself as food for His people in the wilderness; He, the true rock smitten in Horeb, has poured forth the refreshing waters of grace and pardon. He has been lifted up on the Cross as the brazen serpent was lifted up, for the healing of the nations; He, the true Paschal Lamb, has been sacrificed outside the camp, and not a bone of Him has been broken; of the fulfilment of the prophecies, of the types, of His own work on earth, the dying Jesus says, "it is finished."

As we turn aside now to see this great sight, let us remember two things, first, that Jesus died for sin, and that all sin is therefore hateful to Him; aud next, that Jesus still lives to pardon us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Believe, my children, that every sin wilfully committed is like a fresh nail in His dear hands and feet, a fresh thorn in His dear brow. Try to get the better of your sins, not from fear of punishment, but from love to Him Who suffered and died upon the Cross that He might redeem us by His Precious Blood.

SERMON XII.

MOTH AND RUST.

S. MATTHEW VI. 19.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt."

"WHERE your treasure is, there will your heart "be also." Now, we all have some treasure, my children, even the poorest among us. The patriarchs of old, men like Abraham and Job, knew nothing of banks, and stocks, and securities, yet they were very rich, their treasure consisted of flocks and herds of cattle. The savage in the South Sea Islands has a string of beads given him, and that is a treasure in his eyes; the child has his toys, the fisherman has his nets, the shopkeeper his stock, the workman his tools, all these are treasures.

We all think too much of our earthly treasures; I fear we all think far more of ourselves, and our every-day life, than of God, and the life to come; and so Jesus warns us not to lay up treasure

upon earth, not to fix our hearts upon this life, since here the rust and moth corrupt, and thieves break through and steal. By the *rust* is meant anything which eats away a substance; it may be mildew, or damp, or dry-rot, or the wear and tear of time; by the moth is meant that little insect which looks so weak and powerless, and which can yet in some countries reduce a garment to a mere network of threads in a single night. The first thing which we learn from the text is the sin and folly of setting our minds and our affections entirely on earthly things, instead of first seeking the Kingdom of Heaven. We are sure to be disappointed in our earthly treasure, for either we must leave it, or it will leave us, and often while we have it, it causes our ruin. There is an old fable which tells us that a certain King once prayed that everything which he touched might be turned into gold. His prayer was granted, and the food which he wanted to eat became hard and solid gold, so that he would have starved, had not he prayed again that his foolish request might not be longer granted. Many a person, for the sake of gaining treasure on earth, starves his soul and perishes. There is another story which tells us how a man once

obtained great riches and hid them in a chest, but when he went to look at them in the morning, he found only a box of dead leaves. So many a one who trusted only in his treasure, has found it as worthless as the dead leaves at last. Pray then, my children, not for riches, but for *holiness*, that is heavenly treasure, which neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

"Lay not up treasure on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt." How true that is! If you were to bury some gold and silver plate in the earth, as the miser does, it would soon become dull and eaten away by rust; if you spend your treasure extravagantly, it goes from you, and you have nothing. If you wear your clothes constantly, the wear and tear of life soon makes them threadbare and ragged, if you store them away, and lock your drawers and cupboard, the moth gets among them, and frets them to pieces. The moth will not spare either the Queen's purple robe, nor the beggar's rags; whilst the owner is asleep the tiny silent moth is doing his work of destruction. The door is locked and barred against the robber, but a worse enemy is there.

Now, dear children, you will wonder what I

have to teach you from all this, I will tell you. Our worst and most dangerous enemies are those of whom we think least. Whilst we lock up our clothes to preserve them from thieves, we forget to search among them for the moth. Now do you see what I mean? You all have a garment to take care of, the most precious of all garments, far more valuable than the Queen's best robe, it is the white robe of righteousness given you at your Baptism. How are you all guarding that? You may have locked the door against the great sins which come like robbers,—such things as theft, or impurity, or lying, but are you guarding against the *moth*, the little sins which hide away in dark corners, and fret away, eat away your spiritual nature? The great terrible sins, which only the worst criminals commit, are like a fire, they burn up the robe of righteousness at once; but, though you may never have your clothes burned by fire, they may be eaten away by the moth. So, though you may never have committed what people call *great sins*, though you may never have gained the terrible name of *wicked children*, yet you may be indulging in sins small and insignificant in appearance as the tiny moth, but quite as dangerous.

Which do you think would do most harm in your garden, a herd of stray cattle, or a cloud of tiny insects? The great, clumsy cattle, would trample a few beds, and break a few flowers, but you can see them, and soon drive them out; whereas the tiny insects get into every leaf and bud, and all unseen by you, eat out the heart of your plants, and kill them. It is just the same with our sins. If your besetting sin is bad temper, you can see that, every one can see when you are in a passion, it is a violent, noisy sin, like the wild cattle in the garden. But if you are not bad tempered, but yet are deceitful, there is a moth-like sin, hiding away in a corner, concealing itself like the insect in the flower. You may deceive others, you may even deceive yourselves. Your teachers may think you are honest, and straightforward, and your friends may praise you, yet all the while you *know* that you are not honest, not open, that you are only cunning and deceitful. Or perhaps you have a good character in your school, and stand high in your class, and are regular at church, and are called *good children*, and all the time you are concealing the sin of *pride* in your heart, you are thinking how much better you are

than your school-mates; you are vain and conceited, and so, hiding away like a moth, is a sin which is eating away your white robe of righteousness. Or perhaps, you are doing right from a wrong motive; you are trying to be first in your class at school, not because you want to learn, not because you know it is right to work hard at your lessons, not because you want to please your parents and teachers, but because you want to disappoint a school-fellow of whom you are jealous; or perhaps you come to church regularly, not because you love God, and love to hear about Jesus, and are anxious to sing His praises, but because you want to get into favour with some one, and obtain a reward. Here is the moth like sin, the love of praise, hiding away, and destroying your robe of righteousness. Perhaps you give way to indolence, neglect your lessons, or your work, and perhaps you think that as long as you are not found out, it does not matter. But, dear children, you always are found out, did you ever read that text, "thou "God seest me?" God knows when you are wasting the time which He has lent to you to use. Every minute, every hour, every day from life, will have to be accounted for at the last day.

Do you remember those men in the parable, who where asked why they stood idle all the day? They answered "because no man hath hired us." Now, you cannot say that. You know that a Man has hired you, even the Man Christ Jesus, who is also the God Christ Jesus, He hired you at your Baptism, to be His faithful soldiers and servants unto your life's end. Remember then that when you waste, or idle away your time, you are wasting what is not your own, but God's time, which He has lent you to work in. People may tell you that it is nothing to be lazy, nothing to be late for school, nothing to be idle at your work, but, believe me, that sin of indolence is like a moth, fretting away your garment of holiness. If you are idle about your earthly duties, you will be idle about your Heavenly duties; if you are careless in school, you will be careless in church, if you neglect common duties, you will neglect the things which belong to your peace.

Then there are the sins of the tongue, the *little foolish things* which you say, and the little *exaggerations and stories* which you repeat. You may think them only trifles, but they are some of the moths which eat away your white

robe. A christian child should think before he speaks, should keep his mouth as it were with a bridle, when he is provoked, should never repeat idle tales of others, lest he should tell a lie. If you have any good thing to say of a companion, say it, if you know nothing but evil of him, pray for him, and say nothing. Never listen to idle tales about others, and never repeat them.

These sins of which I have spoken are only some out of the many which are called *secret sins*, and which hide away like the moth. Now, how are you to get rid of them? If you want to cleanse a room from moth, you open the windows and doors, and let in the fresh air and the sunshine, and use something to disinfect, or purify the room, but first of all, you search about in every nook and corner, to find where the moth is hidden. Do the same with your hearts, my children; look carefully into your lives, examine yourselves, try and find out the sins which hide away like the moth, and then pray to God to send the light of His Gospel, and the pure fresh air of His Holy Spirit. Pray as David did "who can tell how oft he offendeth? O cleanse "thou me from my secret faults."

SERMON XIII.

GOD'S PICTURE GALLERY.

PSALM XVII. 15.

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

I AM going to show you some pictures, my children; they are some of the oldest pictures in the world, yet there is always something fresh about them. Probably you have all visited a picture gallery at some time or other, now I will take you into God's Picture Gallery, and I will try to paint the pictures in words, that you may recognise them. We shall find, too, that they all have a lesson for us to learn. I scarcely know where to begin, for God's Picture Gallery is the Bible, and it is full of pictures: there are terrible battle fields, and calm smiling meadows; there is the sweet scenery of Paradise, as yet unstained by sin, and the awful black darkness of guilty Egypt. We may look on King Solomon in all his glory, and wicked Ahab sinking down in his

blood-stained chariot, with the fatal arrow sticking between the joints of his harness. Beautiful, kindly Esther is praying for the Jews in Shushan the palace, and cruel Jezebel is plotting the death of innocent Naboth. One series of pictures shows us God's people in the wilderness, now gathering the precious manna, the food from Heaven, and crying in their wonder, "What is "it?"—now murmurring against the beautiful-faced, melancholy leader who was once drawn out of the water at the word of Pharaoh's child. One picture shows us the lightning flashing round Mount Sinai, and the people trembling as they look on Moses bearing the tables of the law; another shows us the same Moses being carried to his burial in that sepulchre which no man knoweth. Who is that time-worn old man, who stands in the midst of the people, his grey hair flying in the wind, and his face scarred by many wounds? It is Joshua, the brave Captain who has led the people through so many enemies, and who is now saying farewell before his death. Hark! We can almost hear the old man say, "Choose you this day whom you will serve. As "for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

Take another picture. It is a golden corn field,

the brown reapers are busy at their toil, the women are gleaning in the stubble. Who is that fair girl on whom all eyes are turned, beautiful as a Queen, yet modest and retiring? It is Ruth the Moabitess, who has left her own land, and her own people, for love of poor, desolate Naomi. They have come from Moab to pleasant Bethlehem, and the House of Bread is full of life and activity, for it is the time of barley harvest. Here is a picture of unselfish love, for us, dear children. Ruth has come a stranger to a strange land, for love of her dead husband's mother.

See, the picture changes, yet still it is a corn field in the harvest time. Look at that bright boy playing among the sheaves! Suddenly he lifts his hand to his forehead, and cries, "my "head, my head." The fierce sun has struck him down. It is the child of the Shunammite, the child of prayer; they carry him to her, and he lies on his mother's knee till the hot noon-day and then breathes softly, and dies. That is a sad picture, children, but the next is brighter. The mother has been to Elisha, the Man of God, and he has prayed, and stretched himself on the dead child, and he has revived, and once more he who was dead, plays with the reapers in the sunny fields.

Here is a picture of another child, he is girded with a linen ephod, and he ministers in the tabernacle of God. Ah! Happy child, to be permitted to dwell close to God's altar, and serve the Lord in His Holy Place! You, my children, who sing in the choir, remember the privilege, the blessing, thus given you, and be ready to say with the child Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy "servant heareth."

We look upon another picture, and see a soldier who is the greatest man in the land, next to the King, his master. His servants honour and obey him, and when his banners go out to war, his enemies tremble. He is a good man, and his wife is fair and gentle, yet her face is sad. Her husband, the great captain, has a terrible disease which no doctor can cure. Look at the picture again, who is that little maid who waits on the soldier's wife? She is a captive, a slave. She has been carried away from her home and friends in the war. Once she lived happily among her kinsfolk in the land of Israel. Perhaps her home was under some spreading fig-tree, or olive grove, at Bethlehem, perhaps she was a native of the great, busy city of Jerusalem, or she may have dwelt among the palm trees of pleasant Jericho.

Now she is a slave, yet she loves her master, the great captain, and her mistress, his wife. She tells her how Naaman, the soldier, may be cured of his disease. She has heard of Elisha, the man of God, the same who raised the Shunammite's son, and she advises her master to go to him and be cured. My children, some of you may be already in service, or may go into service one day. Remember the little Hebrew maid, who is a model for all servants.

What other pictures shall we look at? Shall I show you an old, white haired prisoner in a dungeon, waiting for death? We all know that noble face, worn with fastings oft, and perils by sea and land. It is "Paul the aged," once Saul the enemy of Christ. It was he who was shipwrecked in the storm near Melita; whose feet have often been made fast in the stocks, who has been beaten with many stripes, and stoned for Christ's sake. See the smile on his face, the iron is about his limbs, but it has not entered into his soul. He knows that the sword of the executioner will soon be ready for him, yet he shrinks not. Hear what he says, "I am now "ready to be offered, and the time of my depart-"ure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I

"have finished my course, I have kept the faith, "henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of "righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous "Judge, shall give me at that day." Ah! Brave soldier of Jesus Christ, may we be able to fight our battle, and finish our course as nobly as he did!

There is one portrait which we have not looked on yet, my children, which I know you all want to see. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with "Thy likeness." Whose likeness is it? It is the likeness of Him Whom we desire to see above all things, of Him Who came on earth in the likeness of man; I know that each one of you would say with those Greek strangers in the Gospel "We would see Jesus." Let us look on some pictures in the life of Him Who was called the Man of Sorrows. The first picture we have seen already at Christmas-time. There is the village of Bethlehem all astir with guests who have come for the census; there is the mother of Jesus, weary and footsore, trying to find shelter at the village inn. There is no room. He is the Child of sorrows even before His birth, "He came unto "His own, and His own received Him not." The rude stable, the cave, where the ox and the

ass know their master's crib, is His only shelter, the manger is the throne of the King of Kings. Yet all the starlit sky over Bethlehem is bright with angels, singing the glad tidings of great joy. The picture changes, the weak mother with her babe in her arms is mounted on a camel, escaping into Egypt. Joseph is guiding them, and in Bethlehem yonder there is mourning and weeping, for Herod has slain the Holy Innocents. Again the picture changes, we look on a carpenter's shop in Nazareth. There is the bench littered with tools, and the shavings, and the half-cut wood upon the floor. The Child has grown into a young man. Why is His face so sad? From other workshops the merry song is heard, and smiling faces look forth. But there is no smile on the face of the Man of Sorrows. These other workers have only their own cares and sins to think of, He has the sins of the whole world upon Him. The shadow of the Cross falls upon all His work, He knows the temptations, and the trials, and the agony which He has to bear. He has left the bright courts of Heaven for this rough workshop, the presence of saints and angels for the company of ignorant peasants; the apprenticeship of the Man of Sorrows is hard

indeed. Again the picture changes, there is not even the poor Galilean home for Jesus now. He is in the wilderness, a barren, stony place, with no trees, and where the wild beast wanders. His face is pale and wasted with fasting, and with the struggle against the temptations of Satan, He is the Man of Sorrows still. Another scene! Jesus is no longer the humble worker, and the Child learning, and increasing in wisdom and stature, He is the Minister of mercy. The winds and waves obey Him, the water blushes into wine at His command, yet He is the Man of Sorrows still. He seeks out those who are in trouble. He meets a palsied man, and He heals him, the blind men cry to Him, and they receive their sight; the ruler's little daughter dies, Jesus is there by the bedside; the widow's son is carried to his burial, Jesus is there; He passes through towns and villages, He sees bright faces and cheerful homes, but they are not for Him, He has not where He may lay His head. He sees friends taking sweet counsel together, but *His* followers misunderstand Him, even His mother thinks Him mad. There are no home joys for Him, He must go out into the cruel streets, into the house of death and mourning, to

the grave of Lazarus. Now the pictures grow darker, and sadder. We see the Man of Sorrows weeping over wicked Jerusalem, we see Judas, the traitor, plotting His death for the price of a slave. Look at that garden, overhung by rocks and trees, the Paschal moon is at the full, and floods all the sky, but there are long dark shadows in Gethsemane. There kneels the Man of Sorrows in His lonely agony, the blood starts from His throbbing brow, and the disciples *are asleep*. See how the torches flash among the dark shrubs, the hour is come, the traitor has kissed His Master, and the Man of Sorrows is led away.

Ah! my children, do not our cheeks tingle, and our eyes fill with tears as we look on the pictures which follow? Mark how they blindfold those gentle eyes, how they strike that patient face, how they tear the flesh with scourges. "It is finished." The three Crosses stand out against the black sky. The cruel mob has gone home after the crucifixion. Joseph, the councillor, has carried the broken body to the garden tomb, and there, among the sweet spring flowers, the Man of Sorrows lies, "where the wicked cease "from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

We will only look on one more picture now.

It is that which S. John looked on, as he stood on the rocky shore of his island prison at Patmos. It is the Heavenly City, having the Glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious, whose twelve gates are twelve pearls, and her street like pure gold, as it were transparent glass, where they need not the sun, nor the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.

If we had not seen those pictures of the Man of Sorrows, we could not have looked on this vision of peace. By His Cross and Passion, by His Precious Death and Burial, by His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, He opened the gates of Heaven to all believers. God grant, for Christ's sake, my children, that we may all one day look upon Heaven, not as a picture, but as a reality, and be permitted to see the King in His beauty, in the land which is very far off, and be satisfied, when we awake on the resurrection morning, with His likeness.

SERMON XIV.

SCHOOL TIME.

S. MATTHEW XI. 29.

"Learn of Me."

IT is school-time with us all, my children. The young have their lessons in the class and at the desk, men and women have their lessons out in the world, and even when we are old and grey-headed, as long as we live here, we are at school.

"This life is but a school-time,
In which we learn to love
The friends we see around us,
The unseen God above.

Some learn by active service,
Others in grief and pain;
Some seem to reap in gladness,
The rest to toil in vain.

The great thing is to study
To seek our Lord in all,
His great love to remember,
Whatever may befall."

First, let me speak to you of the school-time of tasks and lessons. Perhaps some of you find the daily round of school-work troublesome, and are inclined to say "Oh! the weariness of it." Perhaps you are looking forward impatiently to the time when you will quit the school room altogether. Rather learn to look at your school-time as the most important period of your life. It is to your future, what the seed time is to the garden, Solomon says truly, "there is a time to "get, and a time to lose." Now is your time to get habits of order and obedience, without which you can never succeed in life; now is your time to rise above that ignorance which is the source of so much sin and misery in the world; now the choice is given you of learning good things, which you may one day teach to others, and unlocking treasures of knowledge, which will hereafter afford you endless pleasure. Many a man has been forced to look back with bitter sorrow to the wasted days of his school-time. I

know that our school days are not always pleasant, there is plenty of hard work, plenty of drudgery to be gone through. The first steps up the ladder of knowledge always seem difficult, but then everything worth doing, or worth having, costs trouble. It may appear troublesome to you to have to learn the dry elements of a language, or the notes of a musical exercise, or the dates of history, but remember that great results always come from small beginnings. Samson, the strong man, and Goliath the giant, were once feeble infants, and learned to walk at first with tottering steps by the nurse's side. The greatest painters in the world, whose pictures delight our eyes, began by learning how to draw a straight line. The greatest sculptors, whose statues seem to live and breathe, began by moulding a lump of clay, the musicians who have filled the world with sweetness, began by picking out their notes with slow and uncertain fingers. Watt, the inventor of the steam engine, got his first ideas of the power of steam from the tea kettle. Never then despise the day of small things. As the tiny seed grows into the flower or shrub, as the little spring swells into the great rushing river, as the acorn developes into the

giant oak, as thousands of words are formed from only a few letters, and millions of numbers from a few figures, so your patient work now will some day bear fruit, and the seed of perseverance blossom into the flower of *success*. Here is a text for your school-time, and for all your life, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with "thy might."

No one succeeds in any work unless he performs it *heartily*.

What was it which enabled some of the most famous persons in history to rise from obscurity and conquer all difficulties, and win the front place? They were in earnest, they did what they had to do with their might. When Christopher Columbus told the learned men of his country that the world was round, and that there was another land beyond the sea, they thought him mad; when he started on his voyage of discovery, his sailors mutinied, and every difficulty was thrown in his way, yet he persevered, and he discovered the New World. All the engineers in England told Stephenson that it was impossible to make a railway over Chat-Moss, but he did not know such a word as "impossible," and so the railway was made.

The greatest general in the army of Peter the Great of Russia, began life as a poor boy who sold cakes in the streets of Moscow. It was being in earnest which made Joan of Arc a heroine, and George Washington a patriot, and Nelson a hero. It was being in earnest which carried Livingstone through Africa, and enabled men to pierce through the Mont Cenis tunnel, and the Suez Canal.

Now, my children, I told you that it was school-time for us all, that to the end of our lives we are learning lessons. This life here on earth is God's school, where he sets us tasks to learn, and gives us prizes and punishments. When this period of schooling is over, we shall go home, home to our Heavenly Father's house, if we have employed our time of learning rightly. What is the one great lesson of life, do you think? Job tells us, "the fear of the Lord that is wisdom, "and to depart from evil is understanding." To learn this great lesson aright, we must learn many other lessons.

One of these is the fact of our own weakness. You have often seen a very little child try to run alone, it has escaped from the nurse's hand, and tries to make its way without assistance, and it

soon falls to the ground. So it is with us, when we try to learn the lessons of life in our own strength. We think we can overcome temptation, and choose the good, and avoid the evil, and presently we fall into some grievous sin, and learn how weak we are.

My children, we want a teacher in this great school of life, one who will take us gently by the hand, and show us the right way, and be patient with us, and sympathise with our troubles and mistakes. Where shall we look for such a teacher? I think you all know, we must go to Him who came on earth to save us from our sins, and to give us an example of a holy life, to Him who said, "learn of me, for I am meek, and "lowly in heart," to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some of the lessons which we have to learn are very hard. One of the hardest is to like God's way better than our own way, we learn that lesson as often as we pray from the heart, "Thy will be done." One of the teachers which God employs in this school-time is *sorrow*, the lessons of this teacher are very severe, and will cost us many tears, yet they are among the best.

When our kind Master Jesus sees that we are

growing too fond of this world, He sends that stern teacher *sorrow* to our side, and although his schooling is very sharp, and the lesson learned perhaps beside a new-made grave, yet through our tears we get a glimpse once more of that Heaven which we had forgotten. Always remember then in whose school you are all your lives through, and when you are in doubt and trouble, or find your lesson too hard for you, go to your Master Jesus, and He will help you.

I told you to be in earnest in your ordinary school-work, I tell you to be in earnest also in God's school. Who have become the greatest saints in the church? Not the most clever, or most wealthy, or most powerful, but those who did what they had to do with their might, those who were in earnest about their religion. It was this earnestness which carried Joshua over Jordan, and through all his enemies to the Promised Land. It was this which enabled S. Stephen to bear the cruel stones, and S. Peter to bear the cross, and S. John the Baptist to bear the sword, S. Paul to bear his fastings, his perils, his stripes, his chains, his martyrdom.

Once more, my children, in God's school aim *at the first place.* You know that if you are

contented with the second place in the class, you will never be first. So in the great school of life, you must not be satisfied with a little religion; you must not be content with being no worse than others, your Master says "be ye "holy, for I am holy, be ye perfect as your "Father in Heaven is perfect." That is to say, strive for the first place.

And now, what of the reward for which we look? In your school-life, two things encourage you to work hard at your lessons, the hope of *gaining a prize*, and the expectation of *going home*.

In the greater school of life in which God teaches us lessons for life eternal, there is the same encouragement. There is a prize to be won, a crown of glory laid up in heaven for those who have tried manfully here to follow the teaching of their Master Jesus. And there is the thought that we shall one day go *home*, home to our Father's House, home to the presence of God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, home to the land where sin and sorrow are unknown, home to the company of angels, and of just men made perfect, home to "the rest that "remaineth to the people of God."

SERMON XV.

SALT OF THE EARTH.

S. MATTHEW v. 13.

"Ye are the salt of the earth."

ONLY a little salt! Perhaps you think that is a strange text for a sermon. Remember, however, my children, who it was who preached from that text, Jesus Christ Himself. I think He chose the salt as His subject, to show us that there is nothing too insignificant in Creation to teach some lesson of the greatness and goodness of God. The religion of Jesus is the religion of common life; and so He often spoke of common things, and from them brought out a Heavenly meaning. If He saw that people were over anxious, He pointed to the birds finding a place for their nests, and the young ravens calling upon God, and then He bid His hearers consider the lilies of the field. There was His sermon

against over-anxiety. If He wished to teach the people how the grace of God grows in our hearts, He went to a cottager's bread-trough, and said, "the Kingdom of Heaven is like leaven, "which a woman took, and hid in three measures "of meal." If He desired to speak of Christian influence and example, He compared them to salt, and said to His disciples, "ye are the salt "of the earth." Let us think of some of the peculiarities of salt. First, *it is a beautiful thing.* You may not think salt very beautiful, as you see it prepared for the table, but if you were to visit a salt mine, you would discover that the crystals which hang from the roof and sides, are among the most glorious sights in nature.

Now, my children, Jesus says to you, "you "are the salt of the earth," and therefore you should try to make your lives *beautiful*, altogether lovely with the beauty of holiness. You know that we cannot all live in grand houses, or wear fine clothes, or a Crown, as the Queen does. But the poorest person can wear a crown of virtues, such virtues as love, and gentleness, and meekness, and unselfishness, and they form a crown which is better than that of all the princes in the earth. We cannot all have grand houses,

but we can decorate our homes, however humble they are. We can adorn them with the ornament of a meek and gentle spirit, we can place the sweet flower of good temper in the room, we can have Jesus Christ as our guest, and then our house will be as good as the finest palace of Solomon in all his glory. Next, *salt purifies, and keeps things sweet.* Now, remember, you, as Christian children, are the salt of the earth, and so it is your duty to purify, and keep things sweet. A little salt will keep a great many things pure, so a little child in a school, or a home, may do the same. An old writer long ago called the Kingdom of Greece the salt of the nations, but you are more, you are the salt of the earth.

If you belong to a large family, where bad temper often shows itself, you can be the salt, by showing gentle Christian love, and so make things sweet. If your companions are impatient, and discontented, you can be the salt, and by being patient and contented yourselves, you can make things sweet and wholesome. We want this salt of *Christian influence* everywhere, in our great towns, and our little villages, in our workshops, and our ships, and our railway carriages,

to counteract the evil example of the wicked, of the foul speaker, of the liar, of the unbeliever, and you, dear children, can do your part. You know that Elisha healed the deadly water with *salt*, so you may cure many foul streams of evil, streams of evil talk, streams of evil habits around you, by the salt of a good example. God has scattered you over the world to be the salt of the earth, will you try to have salt in yourselves, that is, to have the Gospel of Jesus within your hearts, so that you may be able to purify others?

Again, *salt gives flavour to food, and makes it wholesome.* So the influence of a Christian man, woman, or child, gives a right flavour to society. Life without the religion of Jesus Christ, is like food without salt, very tasteless. Some people think they can do very well without God, and without religion, they live to work, and eat and drink, but they find that like the Prodigal Son, they are feeding on husks which do not satisfy. The work of life, and the pleasures of life have no true flavour, unless they are salted with the salt of the Gospel. What you have to do, or to try to do, my children, is to give a flavour of [illegible] of religion, to your homes, to your

work, to your companions, because you are the salt of the earth. Again, *salt gives health and strength to us.* You know how a little time by the seaside restores colour to your pale cheeks, and strength to your limbs. So without the salt of Christ's Gospel our religious life cannot be strong, and healthy. Without it we shall become weak and feeble, our faith will grow dim, our hope uncertain, our piety languid. Without Jesus and His teaching we shall be too weak to bear the troubles of life. The first severe blow will crush us, the first open grave will swallow up all our hopes. We have a hard battle to fight in the world, against sin, and sorrow, and trouble, and we need bracing up for the battle, and it is only the pure strengthening salt of Christ's Gospel which will help us. We want to be kept pure from the sins of the world, first, we must have salt in ourselves, firm faith, helped by constant prayer; then we must try to be as salt to others, and to keep them from the corruption of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Finally, *salt quenches fire, and heals wounds.* Learn then, that nothing puts out the fire of passion like the salt of good temper and gentleness; that nothing puts out the fire of selfishness

like the salt of self-denial, and try, when others are passionate, or selfish, to be the salt of the earth.

If you hear bad talk among your companions, and you, my children, who are at school, often hear it, strive to have your own talk pure, seasoned with the salt of holiness, and you will soon quench that fire of impurity. I have said that salt heals a wound. There is nothing like the salt of meekness to heal the wound of insult or injustice. When you are vexed, or injured, think thus,—Jesus bore it, why may not I?

Try and remember how much so common a thing as salt has to teach you. Think what your influence is over other children, perhaps over older persons, and try to use that influence for *good*, because Jesus has said, "Ye are the salt "of the earth."

SERMON XVI.

GOD'S BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE.

MALACHI III. 16.

"A book of remembrance."

IN some of our great libraries there are old books stored away, which were written ages before printing was discovered. But there is an older book than the oldest volume on earth, and that is God's Book in Heaven. It is not only the oldest, but the most interesting, for in it are written the life-stories of all mankind from the beginning of the world. There are the stories of Abraham and Noah, of Job's patience and Saul's disobedience, there are the stories of strong men and little children, your story and mine are there. Let us think of some of the things which are noted in God's Book. *Our tears of sorrow and penitence* are there. They were shed in secret, but God saw them. The tears which

have fallen on a sick bed, in prison cells, or a workhouse-ward, are noted there in God's Book of Remembrance. The tears of Adam shed over lost Paradise, the tears of Esau shed over his forfeited birthright, of David over Absalom, of S. Peter over his denial, of Jesus over Jerusalem, your tears and mine are recorded there. When the memory of some sin has made you weep bitterly like S. Peter, those tears were very precious in God's sight, since there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. There is a story which I have read, which tells how a little school-boy came, carrying his slate and books, and crying bitterly, to God's priest to tell him of some sin which he had committed. The good old man tried to learn what the little scholar had done, but the child's sobs choked his voice. The Priest told the weeping child to write on his slate what he could not utter, he did so, but when the old man tried to read it, the confession was blotted out by tears. Then with a face full of love and gentleness, the Priest told the little scholar to depart in peace, since his sins were cancelled by the torrent of his repentant tears. Do you remember, my children, that poem of Paradise

and the Peri, which describes how the only gift which could restore the spirit to her lost home was the treasured tear of a penitent sinner?

What other things are noted in God's Book of Remembrance? *Our neglected opportunities, our wasted chances.* Ah! my children, what a long, sad catalogue! The opportunities of your childhood, the lessons of your teachers, the gentle schooling of your parents, the precious seed time of youth, what a sad list these must make in God's Book, if they have been neglected. Do you remember that man who dropped his axe into the water, and then came to the prophet Elisha saying, "Alas, Master, for it was borrowed?" Well, your opportunities, your chances of learning what is right, and of doing what is good, are borrowed; every hour we live is lent to us by God, and we must give an account for it. If we waste the time which God gave us, we shall be forced to cry in our sorrow one day, "Alas, Master, for it was borrowed." What next is noted in God's Book? Our *unrepented sins,* which are therefore *unforgiven* sins. Every cruel, foolish, angry speech which we have not repented of, is written there. That passionate word said to a companion,

that cruel tale told of a playmate, and not atoned for; that secret sin of pride or envy nourished in the heart; are not these things noted in God's Book?

There are other things too written there. Every little act of self-denial, every struggle with a fault, every gentle act and word, are in God's Book of Remembrance. The names of the small and great are there, all who have tried to do good for the love of Jesus Christ. The name of the little Hebrew maid which is not written in the Bible, is written in Heaven. The widow's mite, and Mary's alabaster box, and the clothes which Dorcas made for the poor are not forgotten. So, my children, every time you have tried to minister to the sick and suffering, if you have only carried a few flowers to a poor person's sick room, or stayed to read a little to a lonely sufferer, or given up your play to sit by the bedside of a school fellow, these things are noted in God's Book.

That Book of Remembrance will be opened on the Great Day of Judgment, and from it we shall be judged. Before that great and terrible day comes, let us strive, my children, to repent truly of our past sins and mistakes, our negli-

gences, and ignorances, so that God may, for Jesus Christ's sake, blot out our transgressions like a thick cloud: and for the future let us ask our dear Lord to help us to make our life's story better, and purer, whilst we let this thought act as a check upon our thoughts, and words, and works,—"are not these things noted in "Thy Book?"

SERMON XVII.

THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL.

1 TIMOTHY I. 11.

"The glorious Gospel of the blessed God."

A glorious Gospel indeed, my children, is the good news from a far country, even from Heaven. S. Paul calls the Gospel *glorious*, because it is the Gospel of the *glory* of God, wherein are shown the majesty, the power, the wisdom, the justice, and the love of the blessed God.

The glory of God, as described in the Gospel, is shown in (1,) the Creation of the world, (2,) in the salvation of the world, (3,) in the Judgment of the world, and lastly, in the revelation of Heaven.

First, the glory of God is shown in *the Creation of the world.* How glorious a mystery is it that God created everything out of nothing. No wonder that the angels shouted for joy on

that first birthday of the universe, when all the worlds, many not yet discovered by our weak sight, were marshalled to their places. How glorious is that Hand which poured the brooks into the rivers, and the rivers into the seas, which created the powers of heat and electricity, and moulded the dust into human form, and breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life! All Creation, in us and around us, is a living picture of the glory of God. We see God's hand everywhere, in the towering Alps, and the tiny ant-hill, in the fires of Vesuvius, and the frosts of Mount Caucasus, in the tropical forest, and in the English meadow, in the man of science discovering a world, and in the little child gathering a daisy, in the glittering glory of the peacock's tail, and in the brown of the sparrow's wing. Yes, my children, the glory of God is shown everywhere in Creation. It is painted on every flower, and carved on every rock, it flashes alike from the diamond and the ice. The summer sun, and the wintry snow, seed time and harvest, wind and storm, fulfilling His word, all preach to us the glorious majesty of the most High. There is not a hair of your head, not a pulse in your body, not a seed in

your garden, which is not a living sermon on the glory of the Blessed God.

But if the glory of God is shewn in the Creation, it is still more shewn in the redemption of the world. The Creation is wonderful, the salvation is more wonderful. The sun shining in the Heavens is glorious, the lightning rending the cloud is glorious, the sea tossing its waves, the rainbow spanning the sky,—these are all glorious, and wonderful, but a new-born child is more wonderful still. Man was created by God to have everlasting life, and man forfeited that gift by disobedience; Adam fell, and all mankind fell with him. God in His love and mercy, determined to restore men to that which they had lost. He showed forth His glory by saving men. Now God might have shown His glory in other ways; He might have formed new worlds, or lighted up new suns, but He chose to show it by His long suffering and patience. He, who is Almighty, pleaded with man whom He had made; He, the offended God, provided a Saviour, and, greatest mystery of all, God gave His own Son to be that Saviour. God the Son left the courts of Heaven for the meanest place on earth. He who made Heaven and earth, wanted a

home. He who loves all men, wanted a friend; He the teacher of love, was hated, the King of Kings worked in the carpenter's shop. That same God who created bread to strengthen man's heart, Himself fasted for forty days; He who poured out all the rivers and streams sat thirsty by a well. He who commands legions of angels, yielded to a few Roman soldiers; He the King of Life, died on a Cross, and lay in a borrowed grave. In all this the glory of God is shown.

Now, my children, you will probably misunderstand this, you will say, we see the sorrow, the humiliation, the dishonour of God, but we do not see His glory. What does Jesus Christ Himself say? He says, "*now* is the Son of man "glorified." When was that? Was it when the people shouted "Alleluia?" Was it when He had raised the dead, and healed the sick, or when the winds and the waves obeyed Him? No, it was when He was going to die. It was when Judas was plotting against Him, when the Cross was ready, when the nails and the hammer were prepared, when the thorns were gathered for His crown, then it was that Jesus said, "the Son of "man is glorified." Why did He say that?

Because the sacrifice was so great and glorious, such a sacrifice as God only could have made; because the result was so glorious, the salvation of the whole world. My children, what do we think of most in the glory of God, for what do we praise Him and glorify Him most? Is it because He has made the world so beautiful, so wonderful? No, we rather praise Him, "because "God so loved the world, that He sent His only-"begotten Son, that all that believe in Him "should not perish, but have everlasting life." We praise God indeed for our Creation, our preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all, for His inestimable love in the redemption of the world, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. Our thoughts do not turn so often to God on His glorious throne in Heaven, as to God lying in the Bethlehem manger, or dying on the Cross of Calvary.

But again, the glory of God shall be shown in *the Judgment of the world.* Glorious and terrible will that day be which shall burn as an oven, when the sun and moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall reel from their places, when the earth shall be like one great grave-yard, and shall give up its dead, and the stone shall be

rolled away from every sepulchre, when the great army of the dead shall flock together, kings and beggars, small and great, Cæsar and Cæsar's slave, dark African and pale northerner, false and true, John the faithful and Judas the betrayer, Dives no more in purple, and Lazarus no more in rags. Then shall the glory of God be shown in His perfect justice, and perfect righteousness, then the pardoned shall shine forth as the sun, and the wicked shall go for ever from the presence of God.

Lastly, my children, the glory of God is shown in the glimpses of Heaven which He has given us. No wonder is it that the writers of the New Testament tried every sort of language to describe Heaven, which, after all, must be far too beautiful to be described. Well may they talk about streets of gold, and gates of pearls, and walls of precious stones, and yet all this can be nothing to what Heaven really is. What is it which we look for most in Heaven? It is very sweet, when we are parched with the journey of life, to hear of that pure river in Heaven, clear as crystal. It is very sweet for the tired worker to hear of rest beside the glassy sea, it is very sweet for the mourners to know that there all tears are

wiped away, and for the weary watcher to learn that there is no night there. But there is one thing beyond all these to which we should look forward in Heaven. It is not the peace, nor the beauty, nor the rest, which should attract us most, nor the goodly company of saints and angels; to be with Jesus, to sit at His feet, to see with our eyes the glory of which we read in His Gospel, this is Heaven, since Heaven is to be with Jesus.

SERMON XVIII.

LIFE'S JOURNEY.

DANIEL XII. 13.

"Go thou thy way till the end be, for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

WE all started on a journey some years ago, my children, some of us started sixty years, some twenty years ago, most of you began your journey only a few years since. That journey is from the cradle to the grave, from this world, to the world to come. It is a journey upwards to Heaven, or downwards to Hell. Let us think now what that journey is like, how we are making it and where it will end. The first thing of which we have to think in a journey is *the start.* When children leave home first to travel on the road of life, their father usually gives them his blessing, and such gifts as he can afford. So when we started on our journey of life from the font of Holy Baptism, God our Father gave us His blessing,

and the gifts of His Holy Spirit. Next, we must think of *the path* which we must tread in our journey. It will not be all smooth; there will be many rough places, many sharp stones of affliction to cut us, many rocks of difficulty to bruise us, many thorns of disappointment to pierce us. But neither will the path be all rough; there will be pleasant resting places, and bright flowers to cheer and comfort us. We shall not always be in the fierce glare of the sun. Jesus will be to us like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He will lead us into the green pastures of His Church, and by the still waters of His grace, and will feed us with Heavenly food, lest the journey be too great for us, and will send us good news from a far country, even His Holy Gospel. Learn next that our journey will *be up-hill.* We are not like those who dig for treasure down in the earth, our treasure is in Heaven, and we must climb after it. "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," that Heavenly City which is above, whither our Master Jesus has gone before. We must be like those who climb steep mountains, then every temptation conquered, every sin overcome will bring us higher, and nearer to the mountain top

and the Heavenly country. The journey is not always of the same length; some little children are permitted to climb up to the arms of Jesus in a few months or years. Some of us must climb patiently and steadily till our hair is white, and our eyes are dim. How then, my children, must we climb? We must not have too much of the earth to clog our feet. We must not let the pleasures of life get too strong a hold of us, nor the sorrows of life hang too heavily on us, or we shall never climb up to the City of the great king.

If ever we are to rest *there,* we must climb *here.* If ever we are to be in the presence of Jesus there, we must make our life one long preparation here. We cannot walk through all the foul and filthy places of the world, and when we are tired of them enter Heaven.

Let me give you a few rules for your journey. First, you must travel *hopefully.* Faint hearts never climb hills, nor overcome difficulties. When you are inclined to be cast down, remember the promises of Jesus; how He has told you that He will never leave you, nor forsake you, that His strength is sufficient for you, that you shall go from strength to strength, and that

everyone of you shall appear before the God of Gods in Sion. Next, you must travel through life *cheerfully*. You are not going to death, but to life eternal, not from good to worse things, but to a land where there is no lack of anything which is good. Let others see by your example that religion is happiness, not gloom. Next, you must travel *patiently*. We cannot reach the Heavenly Jerusalem with a bound. We must bear sorrow as Jesus bore it; we must carry a cross as Jesus carried it, we must be made perfect through sufferings as He was.

You know that the silver is tried in the fire that it may be cleansed from impurity, and that the precious stone is cut and polished before it glitters in the crown, and the fragrant leaf must be bruised before it gives forth perfume. Then you must travel *prayerfully*, praying always and everywhere. Prayer will carry you close to God even while you are far off from the Heavenly country. Whom will you choose for travelling companions? The Holy Angels will guard and guide you, and bear you up lest you dash your feet against a stone, those who long to forsake their sins, and to arise and to go to their Father, these will bear you company. But above all, you must

have Jesus as your fellow-traveller. You will find Him in the Blessed Sacrament, you will find Him in the services of His Church, you will find Him in the pages of His Gospel. "Go then on thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of thy days." There in Jerusalem the golden you shall cry with joy and gladness "The lot is fallen unto "me in a fair ground, yea I have a goodly "heritage."

SERMON XIX.

LITTLE DUTIES.

S. LUKE XVI. 10.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much."

THIS great universe is made up of little atoms; the vast sea is made up of little drops of water, our lives are made up of little events, acts, thoughts, joys, and sorrows. If you take away one tiny wheel from the mechanism of a watch, its regularity is lost, if you leave a small leak in a ship unstopped, the vessel will sink. Why do I tell you these things, my children? Because I want to show you that the small duties of life, which are sometimes called *trifles*, are really of the greatest importance. The prophet says, "who hath despised the day of small things?" This life of ours on earth is the day of small things, in which we are prepared for the day of great things in Heaven, and our daily life here consists of little duties, and little cares, none of which must be neglected. I speak now more especially to those of you who have passed from

home and school to domestic service, and I would tell you of some of those duties of your position to neglect which is to commit sin.

There is the duty of *carefulness* in small matters. One of the things which belongs to this head is *punctuality*. Perhaps you may think that a few minutes make very little difference. But if your mother were dying, and you started to take the train to see her, and missed it by five minutes, would not those few minutes make a difference to all your future life? People have lost a fortune, or a good situation, by being two minutes too late in posting a letter; people, we may believe, have lost Heaven by being too late in choosing for God. Be punctual then in all you do, in your attendance at church, in your prayers, in your work. If a duty is not done at the right time, it is generally left undone. "I quite forgot," is the favourite excuse of the careless and unpunctual.

I can scarcely tell you the mischief which those three little words have caused in the world. A master gives his servant a message to deliver, it refers to a business appointment on which thousands of pounds depend, the appointment is not kept, the master enquires of his

servant if the message were delivered, and the answer is, "I quite forgot." This sin of carelessness is a sin against God, as well as against an employer. Each one of us must give an account to God for the manner in which he or she has done the work which is given us to do. Your masters and mistresses are responsible to God for their conduct, the servant is responsible to God also. Never forget that your Master is in Heaven, and that your earthly service is part of God's service.

Another of these duties, which are called trifles, is *strict honesty* in small matters. All of you would shudder at the idea of robbing an employer to a large extent, and of being dragged to a police court, and called a thief, but have you ever thought that to take small articles of food or dress, which do not belong to you, is quite as dishonest an act as to steal a hundred pounds? "He that is faithful in that which is least, is "faithful also in much." If something is not *quite* right, it is wrong, and an act which is not *quite* honest, is a sin. Remember those words of your catechism, in which you promise to keep your hands from picking and stealing, and learn that unless you are strictly honest in the

least things, you are not honest at all.

There is another form of dishonesty very common among servants, that is wilful waste. Your master's goods are entrusted to your keeping, if you wilfully destroy, or waste them by neglect, or by extravagance, you break that commandment which says, "thou shalt not steal." Many a prisoner who is disgraced and shut out from honest society, can trace the beginning of his fall to little acts of dishonesty in domestic service.

There is another duty of which I would remind you, *strict truthfulness* in small matters. Any of you would be very angry at being called a liar, but you must remember that if you do not speak all the truth about a matter, or if you wilfully exaggerate, or add to a statement, or if you repeat stories of others which you do not know to be facts, you are not telling the *truth*, and those who do not tell the truth speak lies. There are people who talk about *black lies*, and *white lies*, but we know all falsehood comes from the devil, who is the father of lies, and I do not see how there can be anything white, or innocent about it. Always speak the honest truth, my children, if you wish to be the children of that God who is Truth.

The greatest safeguard for you in service is constant and regular prayer. Now it is possible that you may be in a service where there is no family prayer, or where your fellow servants neglect to kneel morning and evening to ask God's help and guidance through the day, it is possible that you may be laughed at for saying your prayers. Let nothing keep you from telling God your needs and your troubles. Never mind the laughter of others, only persevere, and you will soon gain the mockers over to your side. Pray for those who do not pray for themselves, and you may be the means of bringing them to Jesus. A holy servant in a household is a blessing to all, we should not hear so much said about bad servants now a days if you would only pray more. You will in the wide world of domestic service have many temptations which you did not know whilst at home, or in school, the only way to meet them and to conquer them is by being constant in prayer, in church, and out of church, by seeking strength in the Holy Communion of our dear Lord's Body and Blood, and by always remembering that He is your Master who shall at the last say to His own, "well done "good and faithful servant."

SERMON XX.

THE BEST SERVICE.

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."

IT was time for the old man Joshua to give up his charge. For years he had led the people, and fought the battles of the Lord. His sword had had no time to rust in its scabbard, it had been too often needed against the Philistines, and the Moabites, and the other enemies of God's people. And now Joshua was a white-haired old man, and his right hand was no longer strong enough to wield a sword, and his eye was too dim to distinguish the enemy in the distance. He knew that his time was come, that he was going the way of all the earth, and that his last battle had been fought. Before he gave up his charge however, the old warrior called the people of Israel together, and gave them a solemn address, to which they must have listened as to

the words of a dying man. First, he told the people what God had done for them; how He had called their Father Abraham, and made of him a great nation. He reminded them how Joseph had served in Egypt, and how he was thrown into prison, and afterwards was raised to Pharaoh's right hand. He recalled to their memory their hard task masters in the brick fields, and their deliverance by the hands of Moses and Aaron. He told them how the Lord had led them like a flock, how He had guided them with the cloudy pillar by day, and all the night through with a light of fire. He spoke of the Red Sea's obedient waves, of the desert and its troubles, the bitterness of Marah, and the rest at Rephidim, and then when he had rehearsed all the whole acts of the Lord, he cried unto the people "Choose you this day whom ye "will serve. As for me and my house, we will "serve the Lord." My children, God has led you, His spiritual Israel, thus far towards the Promised Land, by the way of the desert, and through the Red Sea of His Blood. To-day I say to you "Choose you this day whom ye will "serve." Perhaps you think that you have chosen, that because I see you here in Church it

is a proof that you have chosen God's service. It may be so, or it may not. I want you to consider what sort of life you are leading *out* of Church. I want you to think how you are going to act, and talk, and think, after this Holy Service is over, after the last hymn has died away, and the words of the Blessing are ended. Too many people may be called *Sunday Christians*, people who think that religion means only coming to Church for a hour or so once a week. This is not religion, my children. God's people must try to live as near to Him on Monday and all other days, as on Sunday. Every place in which you are should be made a holy place. If you leave this Church and go forth to talk foolishly and sinfully; if you go forth to lead the rest of the day and the week *away from God*, can you look upon yourselves as having chosen God's service? I speak now more especially to you who are in domestic service; now, I ask you, are you trying to make that God's service also? I know that you meet with many temptations which you did not know when you were at home, or at school. Every position in life has its special temptations. You are more free, you are left more to your own judgment, you can spend your spare time without

a parent's or teacher's eye upon you. There is a great temptation for you to spend that time badly, to fall into evil company; you, young girls, have certain special dangers to guard against; you, young men and boys, have other dangers to guard against. I say to you again, choose you this day whom ye will serve. You cannot serve two masters, you must either be God's servants, or the devil's slaves, there is no middle course. You cannot serve God a little, and Satan a little. You cannot sin all the week wilfully, and then wipe off the score by coming to Church on Sunday. Do you think that God will accept your service on Sunday, will listen to your prayers, will receive your singing as true praise, if He knows that you have been dishonest, or false, or impure, during the week, and that you are not sorry for it? If you clasp you hands in prayer now, and if you yet mean to go back and steal, pilfer, and waste with those same hands, do you think God *believes* in your prayer? If you allow your voice, just now raised in singing holy chants, and psalms, and hymns, to speak angrily, or immodestly, or falsely presently, do you think God will accept your singing as *praise*? I think you must see that the fact of your presence here in Church does not

prove that you have chosen God's service. How then are you to know if you have chosen that service? "By their fruits shall ye know them." If you are the servants of Jesus Christ you will try to be like Him, you will strive to lead holy lives *every day*. You must let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works. My children, I want you all to try and be *Saints*. Perhaps you have heard some of your companions speak contemptuously of some one who is trying to lead a holy life; perhaps you have heard them say, "Oh! he or she is a saint," as if that were a disgrace. Well, I want you all to try and be saints, because that means holiness, and without holiness no man shall see the Lord. You think, I dare say, that if you were in any other position than that in which you are, you might be saints, but as it is, you fancy it is impossible. You say to yourselves, I have hard, coarse, work to do, I have to bear hard words and cross tempers, I have to get up early and light the fire, I live in a kitchen, how can I be a saint? You think, perhaps, if I were rich, and had fine dresses, and plenty of money, and a carriage to ride in, I might be a saint, but not as a farm servant, not as a ploughboy, not as a maid of all work. There

you are wrong, my children, God is always close to His people, wherever they are, in a great house or small. You can be a saint in a back kitchen as well as in a palace. Wherever we try to lead holy lives, wherever we pray, and watch against temptation, and strive to be like Jesus Christ, whether it be behind a plough, or among the roaring wheels of a manufactory, or in the darkest back kitchen that ever was built, there we may be God's people, God's saints. Do you think that the saints of old who lived and died for Jesus were all rich and noble? Was not S. Peter a fisherman, and Lydia a seller of purple? Did not Dorcas work with her needle? The chief saint of Madrid, in Spain, was a ploughman, and S. Veronica was a maid of all work. Believe me, my children, honest, truthful servants, be they what they may, cooks, or housemaids, nurses, or what not, if they strive to be godly, pure, faithful in that work to which God has called them, shall have their names written in Heaven side by side with the brightest saints in God's presence, for remember, God is no respecter of persons.

SERMON XXI.

PRAYER.

S. LUKE XVIII. 1.

"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

I WOULD speak to you, my children, to-day, about Prayer. I do not think that I can talk to you on any more important subject. First of all, are we quite sure that God hears and answers prayer? Let us look into our Bibles, there we shall find how Moses prayed for the people, and they were healed; how Hannah, the childless woman, prayed, and her son Samuel was given to her; how Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel, and the fire came down from heaven and consumed the sacrifice, how he prayed for rain after more than three years drought, and God opened the windows of Heaven. Look for the name of Elisha in your Bibles, and you will find that he prayed for the little son of the Shunammite, who died, and he was restored to life. Read of Hezekiah, and you will

see how he prayed to God to heal him when he was about to die, and how he was allowed to live for fifteen years. Daniel prayed when the lions came about him in the den, and God shut their mouths. S. Paul and S. Silas prayed when they were fast in prison, and God unfastened the stocks and loosened the chains. When Samson was fainting with thirst he prayed to God, and water was given to him. It was prayer which broke open the grave of Lazarus, and soothed "the "dull cold ear of death." What example does our Saviour give us in this matter? His whole life on earth was a life of prayer. He retired to a mountain apart to pray; the agony in the garden found vent in prayer, even the slow misery of the Cross could not quench the spirit of prayer. The wide love of Jesus embraced all in prayer. He prayed for the tiny children, for His friends and disciples, for His enemies. His dying words were, "Father, forgive them, for they know not "what they do." He prayed for the whole world when He said "Thy kingdom come." We learn then from the Bible, and from the example of God's own Son, the *power of prayer*. Next, let us think *how* we ought to pray. We ought to meet together to pray openly, this is called

Public Prayer, or Common Prayer. The Church has in all ages ordained that people should thus meet together for public worship, the Apostles of our Lord did so. Sometimes you hear people say "I do not go to Church, but I say my prayers "at home." Now I do not believe those people, those who pray publicly in Church, are most likely to pray privately at home. It must be a grand thing, even among the grandeur of Heaven, to find the united prayers of a body of people rolling up like a cloud of incense, and swelling forth like the sound of many waters. Believe me, in Heaven they love to hear the prayers of a united congregation. Now if you look into your Prayer Books, at the beginning of Morning Service, you will see four reasons for coming to Church. There we read that although we ought at all times to acknowledge our sins before God, yet we ought chiefly so to do when we assemble and meet together, (1) to render thanks for the great benefits which we have received at His hands, (2) to set forth His most worthy praise, (3) to hear His most Holy Word, (4) to ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as the soul. Thus we come to Church to *thank* God, to *praise* God, to *learn*

from God, and to *pray* to God. I want you to remember this, my children, when next you come to God's holy temple, then you will not find the service tedious, then you will understand what a privilege it is to be allowed to meet together in Church.

If only you remember that you come to worship God present there, to pour out your heart and soul toHim who alone can help you,to confess your sins to Him who can pardon you, to hear the message of salvation, and to show forth God's praise before all men, then you would never be inattentive in Church, we should have no silent lips, no sleepy eyes, no unbent knees. I want you to pray to God, and to praise God, and to thank God *as if you meant it.* When you say "we "have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost "sheep, we have left undone those things which "we ought to have done, and we have done those "things which we ought not to have done," I want you to recall your sins, and to feel that what you are saying is sadly true. So when you praise God in psalms and hymns, and chants, do so with all your might, put your whole heart and soul into the words of praise, sing "lustily and "with a good courage." When you pray, do so

with faith, believing that God will hear you and answer you, not perhaps in the way which you expect, but in the best way for your welfare. Again, my children, try to be *unselfish* in your prayers. Too many of us think only of ourselves and our immediate friends when we pray. Try for the future to ask God's help on behalf of all sorrowing people everywhere, all widows and afflicted people, all impenitent sinners, as your Prayer Book teaches you; pray for Christ's holy Church all over the world. Freely ye have received, freely give your prayers.

Thus far I have spoken to you of public prayer. Next, I would urge you to meet together for *family prayer.* We cannot expect our homes to prosper unless they are made holy by prayer from basement to attic. There are prayerless homes where they have rich furniture, and money, and food and drink, and luxury, but I do not think they have God there.

And now I pass on to speak of *private prayer.* I suppose all of you say your prayers by your bedside night and morning. Alas for you if you do not, for you are living without God in the world! You may be living in service where your fellow servants do not pray, and they may mock

at you, and try to prevent you from kneeling down and asking God's help. My children, be strong and of a good courage, and let nothing hinder you from praying. Once upon a time it was death to pray to the true God, now you may meet with a little opposition, and laughter, but only persevere, and then God to whom you pray will deliver you out of all your distress. But even your regular morning and evening prayers are not enough. I want you to live in an *atmosphere of prayer*. I would have you acquire the habit of praying silently at any time and in any place. Prayer is the only armour to turn aside the darts of sin, and temptation, and sorrow, and bereavement. Pray about your work, pray about your amusements, that you may be kept innocent, pray about your worries and vexations, pray for your companions, for your employers, pray about everything. If our country is to be a religious and godly land, we must have more prayer in it; prayer in the palace and in the cottage, prayer in the shop and the farm, prayer in the kitchen and in the drawing room, prayer in the nursery by the quiet bedside, and prayer out in the busy working world, prayer always, and prayer everywhere.

SERMON XXII.

THE PRINCE OF SPEAKERS.

S. JOHN VII. 46.

"Never man spake like this man."

WHEN God desired to place man at the head of all other animals He gave him the power of *speech.* God has made animals stronger, and more active, and more enduring, and as brave as man, but to him He gave speech, and so He gained dominion over the beasts of the field. Now, I might tell you of the influence which the power of speech has exercised in the world. I might tell you how the history of great nations has been changed by it, how kingdoms have been lost, battles have been fought, souls have been saved, through the power of the tongue. I might tell you how the saints of old have led the people to forsake their idols, to bear insult and persecution, and death, for the sake of Jesus

Christ. I might tell you how the voice of a General in battle has encouraged his soldiers to charge through every danger to victory, and how the whisper of a woman's voice has led men to forsake honour and God; but I have a higher purpose. I would tell you of One who spake as never man spake, of One who was, and is Man, the Man Christ Jesus, and the God Christ Jesus. I will speak to you of His words, that we may take them as a pattern for our own. Why was it that Jesus spake as never man spake? Because He is God as well as Man. He brought the wisdom of Heaven to light up the common things of earth. What were the words of Jesus like? *First, they were words of power.* In the beginning, before the earth and the sea were made, Jesus spoke, "for by Him "all things were made," He said, "let there be "light,"—then the first sunrise flashed over hill and dale, gilding field and forest, sea and river with its brightness. Then the first stars sparkled in the sky, and the moon was appointed for certain seasons. Jesus spoke, and in place of confusion there was order. God's Word opened the first rosebud, and perfumed the first lily, and coloured the first violet. His Word made a

mass of clay a living man. So the words of Jesus in Heaven were words of power. His words on earth too were words of power. A sick man was brought to Him, his disease was terrible, his neighbours fled from him, no medicine could cure him, Jesus spoke, and said "be thou clean," and the sick man was healed. A man came to Him who had been blind from his birth, all the doctors had tried in vain to relieve him, they had said, "You will never see;" Jesus spoke, and the blind eyes were opened. When people came with stammering tongues, and twisted limbs, and deaf ears, Jesus spoke, and all was well. "Never man spake like this man." Jesus spoke to the powers of nature, and they obeyed Him. When the storm was raging on the lake, and the boat was covered with the waves, He spoke. Who else could calm that storm? Cæsar the Emperor, or Herod the King, or Pilate the Governor, might speak in vain; Jesus only could say "Peace, be still," and be obeyed. "Never man spake like this man." There was one power which no man had conquered. Death had had the victory till then. Jesus spoke to the ruler's daughter, to the widow's son at Nain, to Lazarus, and death lost

its power. "Never man spake like this man." My children, Jesus speaks words of power now. He speaks by His Holy Spirit, by the teaching and the Sacraments of His Church, by the words of His Gospel, and by the whisper of conscience. When we are sick with that disease of sin, which no doctor can cure, when we come to God in penitence, saying "I am a man of unclean lips, "and I dwell among a people of unclean lips; "the good which I would, I do not, and the evil "which I would not, that I do," it is Jesus alone who can say to us "Be thou clean," and so we are healed of that plague. So when the storm and tempest come, when the ship of the Church is beaten by the waves of persecution, and the ark of home is threatened by dark waters of sorrow, which seem to go even over our soul, then, if Jesus be with us, all will be well; He will send forth His voice, and that a mighty voice, saying "Peace, be still."

Again, the words of Jesus *were words of beauty*. Whatever He talked of became altogether lovely. You know how a sculptor will take a lump of clay and model it, or take a block of marble and carve it into a form of beauty; so whatever Jesus spoke of he adorned. He made

common things give forth sparks of Heavenly light, as the common flint gives forth sparks of fire. The fishing net became a parable of the Church, the sparrows, and ringdoves, and lilies, became pictures of God's care and love, and a wandering sheep was glorified into a wandering sinner. Surely it was not at Cana only that Jesus turned water into wine, the poorest, commonest, thing was changed by Him who spake as never man spake. My children, our words should be words of power, because of our faith. We *know* in whom we have believed, and so we should be ready to speak boldly for the truth as it is in Jesus. Use your influence among your companions and fellow-servants to check words of irreverence or unbelief, and when such talk arises, do not be ashamed to confess Christ before all men. Our words should also be words of beauty, they should be adorned with the beauty of holiness, and of purity. What has a Christian to do with foul words, or angry or immodest words, since he is a follower of Him who spake as never man spake? Once more, the words of Jesus were *words of sympathy*. He could rebuke terribly, but never unkindly. He never reviled, or spoke evil of others, and He never refused

sympathy. When the wedding party at Cana was embarrassed, Jesus was appealed to. When Jairus, and Martha, and Mary were in sore grief, they went and told Jesus. When that poor woman clasped His garment there was a kind word for her. When the penitent thief wanted a cheering word in his death agony he received it. So now, Jesus speaks words of love and sympathy to us. In time of grief and perplexity He says, "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." In our hours of penitence and sorrow He says, "Go, and sin no more." In our day of loneliness He says, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake "thee." In our poverty He says, "You shall "have treasure in Heaven." In the hour of death He whispers, "I am the resurrection and "the life." Let us strive, my children, to make our words kindly, loving, and full of sympathy. The power of a kind word spoken in season is very great. When we hear our employers, or companions, spoken evil of, let it be our task to speak good words for them, and to find out their virtues instead of their faults. When in the kitchen or workroom angry voices rise in quarrel, be it your task to give the soft answer which turneth away wrath.

"When deep within our swelling hearts,
The thoughts of pride and anger rise,
When bitter words are on our tongues,
And tears of passion in our eyes,
Then we may stay the angry blow,
Then we may check the hasty word,
Give gentle answers back again,
And fight a battle for our Lord."

SERMON XXIII.

HOLY CONFIRMATION.

ECCLESIASTES XII. 1.

"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

You have come to the time, my children, when openly, and in the face of the Church, you are called upon to dedicate yourselves, your souls and bodies, solemnly to God; to God the Father who created you, to God the Son who redeemed you, to God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies you. When you were little infants Christian parents brought you to your Baptism, and to the arms of Jesus Christ; now that you are old enough to avoid the evil and to choose the good, you are about to show publicly what choice you have made. Before the solemn moment arrives, when you will kneel before God's Bishop, and receive, by the laying on of his hands, the strengthening, or confirmation, of the grace given you in Baptism, let me speak a

few words of warning and counsel to you. First, set a right value upon confirmation. There are some who will tell you that it is a mere form, that it can do you no good, that the fact of the Bishop laying his hands upon your head cannot affect you for good or evil. Such people speak either through ignorance, or because they are too proud and self-sufficient to obey the laws of the Church. Such people might as well object to holy Baptism, and declare that a little water poured over a child by the priest is useless; or they might as well say that a little bread and wine received in the Holy Communion is without value. As a rule those persons who object to confirmation, will be very likely to deny the grace of sacraments altogether. You must remember that you are members of the Church of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church, she is your teacher, and it is because she has in all ages, brought young baptized persons to be confirmed, that you are now preparing for that holy rite. Next, guard against the notion that confirmation consists in merely passing an examination, and satisfying the clergyman that you know the creed and the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and the chief doctrines of the

christian religion. This is only one part of confirmation. It is not so much a matter of the *head* as of the *heart*, it does not matter so much what you *know*, as what you *feel*. You might know the whole Bible by heart, and be able to repeat the creed without a mistake, and yet be very wicked. You might be able to say many forms of prayer, and yet never pray to God from your heart. Confirmation should mean for you that you are determined to try and be God's faithful soldiers and servants to your life's end; that you desire to show this forth publicly in the eyes of the Church, and that you seek to be strengthened in this determination by the gifts of God's Holy Spirit. Unless you look upon your confirmation in this light, it is worse than useless, it is a deadly sin, for you to present yourselves for that holy rite. Seeing then, dear children, how solemn, how important, a turning point this is in your lives, you cannot without grievous sin look upon it lightly or carelessly, as a holyday when you wear new clothes, or a mere form to be gone through and forgotten. You come of your own free will to declare that you have enlisted under the banner of Jesus Christ; that you intend, with God's help, to lead pure and

holy lives, and to follow the example of your Saviour, that you mean to fight manfully against the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil, and that you will not follow them, nor be led by them. You are going openly to announce that you mean to walk worthy of the vocation whereunto you are called, forsaking those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, that you mean to try and live above the world whilst you live in it, and to let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works. Surely then this is a very solemn time for you. Next, you must remember that confirmation is the gate of Holy Communion. The one without the other is of no avail. Up to this time you have been waiting, as it were, just inside the church door, after you are confirmed you are free to come to the altar, the holy of holies, and there receive the Body and Blood of your Saviour. Doubtless you will all come to your first Communion, but this is not enough, do not stop short there, having begun well, do not go back. Without that Spiritual Food your souls cannot live. "Unless "ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink "His blood ye have no life in you." Nothing

can be plainer than those words. You know that you cannot bear the fatigue of a long journey without food for your body; neither can you bear the journey from this world to the next without food for the soul, regularly and frequently received. How do you expect to fight the hard battle against sin, against the temptations in you and around you, unless Jesus is one with you, and you with Him? And where can you be joined to Him but in that Blessed Sacrament, where He comes to you hidden in the humble form of bread and wine, as once he came on earth hidden in the humble form of the carpenter's son? Take heed, my children, how having entered on the right path, you turn aside to evil, for it is written, "if, after they have escaped the "pollutions of the world through the knowledge "of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are "again entangled therein, and overcome, the "latter end is worse with them than the begin-"ning. For it had been better for them not to "have known the way of righteousness, than, "after they have known it, to turn from the "holy commandment delivered unto them."

When a youth, in the old days, was about to be made a knight, he passed the hours of darkness

before the important day, in church, watching and praying beside his armour. You, my children, who are about to take up the weapons of spiritual warfare, and to put on the whole armour of God, will do well to spend the hours immediately before your confirmation in earnest watching, prayer, and self-examination. And now my last words are said, I commend you to God, and when your confirmation shall have made you doubly God's for ever, may you go forth into the world as examples of loyal churchmanship, of pure womanhood, of manly christianity, and may the Lord Jesus Christ bless you, and keep you in all your ways, now, and for ever.

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